LETTERS

FROM

SCANDINAVIA.

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LETTERS

FROM

SCANDINAVIA,

ON THE

PAST AND PRESENT STATE

OF THE

NORTHERN NATIONS

OF

EUROPE.

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Page

Characteriſtics of different Nations.—Lapland Mythology.—Laplanders' Account of the Creation of the World and the Origins of Nations.—Superſtition has given the fineſt Ideas to ancient and modern Poets and Painters.—Of the Miſſionaries ſent into Lapland.—The Reflections of barbarous Nations upon the Religion of civilized Nations.—Anecdote of an Indian Merchant at Quebec.—Lapland Deities and Wiſe Men.—Of the ancient Religion of the North.—Of Odiniſm.—Of Mahomediſm.—The Voluſpa, an ancient Poem deſcriptive of the Deſtruction of the World —— —— 1

LETTER XXXIX.

Page

Cuſtoms and Manners of the Laplanders.—Lapland Courtſhip.—Lapland Language.—Of their Marriages.—Reſemblance of Lapland with Aſiatic Manners.—Manufactures.—Navigating the Rivers very dangerous.—M. Pallas's Account of the Birch-tree, and of its various Uſes, and even as a Food to the Northerns.—Diſeaſes and Remedies.—Dreſs.—Offer their Women to Strangers.—Their Love of Money.—Le Monnier's Deſcription of Aurora Borealis.—Anecdote of Mr. Howard.—Severity of the Lapland Climate.—Le Monnier's pictureſque Deſcription of the Face of Nature in Lapland —— —— 21

LETTER XL.

Attack made by the Swediſh Fleet upon a Ruſſian Squadron at Revel.—The Ruſſian Fleet fitted out at Cronſtadt in the courſe of a few Days, and ſails for the Gulph of Finland —— —— 44

LETTER XLI.

Contraſt between Peterſburgh and London.—Propoſed Improvements for the Britiſh Metropolis.

Page

tropolis.—Anecdote of Mr. Howard.—Aſiatic Cuſtoms and Manners of the Ruſſians 51

LETTER XLII.

Summer Amuſements of the Ruſſian Nobility.—Anecdote of a Pariſian Lady.—Celebration of the Fourth of June in a Ruſſian Wood.—Anecdote of a Britiſh Officer—of the Finland Girls.—Situation of the Slaves.—Contraſt of Character between Aſiatics and Europeans.—Ruſſians converſe with their Horſes, as do all Aſiatics.—Horſe-racing patroniſed by Count Orloff.—The preſent degenerated State of the Tartars — 60

LETTER XLIII.

Of the Facility of acquiring Languages in Ruſſia.—Of the Ruſſian Bagnios.—Anecdotes of the moſt celebrated Nuns.—Anecdotes of ſome Britiſh Officers.—Anecdote of Paul Jones.—Foundling Hoſpitals.—A new Plan for eſtabliſhing Aſylums for reformed Proſtitutes —— —— 72

LETTER XLIV.

Anecdote of Mr. Wilkes's late Houſe-keeper, now at Peterſburgh.—Anecdote of an Engliſh Dog.—Ruſſians become jealous of Foreigners,

Page

reigners, and the Cauſe of this.—Anecdote of an Iriſh Gentleman, a Ruſſian Prince, and of Count ——, Governor of Moſcow 86

LETTER XLV.

Mr. Coxe's Account of the Finlanders differs from the Accounts given in theſe Volumes, and the Reaſons of this.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Finlanders.—Manufactures.—Finland Marriage.—Love Anecdote.—Reflection upon Marriage Laws.—Finland Baths.—Their Women appear naked in public.—Lady Mary Montague's Ideas refuted.—Finland Diverſions reſembling thoſe in Scotland.—Droll Anecdote of the Finland and Livonian Languages —— 95

LETTER XLVI.

The intereſting Hiſtory of Maria Feodorovna, a young Ruſſian Counteſs —— 107

LETTER XLVII.

The Hiſtory of Maria Feodorovna concluded 119

LETTER XLVIII.

Deſcription of the Palace of Zarſko Zelo.—Imperial Baths.—Gardens.—Statues.—Obeliſks, &c.—City of Sophia.—Anecdote of M. Samboriſki, a Ruſſian Clergyman.—

Schemes

Page

Schemes for the Improvement of Agriculture.—Anecdote of the Empreſs Catharine II. and of the Grand Duke —— 130

LETTER XLIX.

Defeat of the Swediſh Fleet.—Swediſh Priſoners of War.—Meanneſs and Folly of the Life and Occupation of Military Mercenaries.—Swediſh and Ruſſian Uniforms.—Armorial Bearings —— 141

LETTER L.

Peace between Ruſſia and Sweden.—Rejoicings on that Account —— 150

LETTER LI.

Winter Landſcape.—Hunting.—Ruſſian and Finland Peaſants —— 159

LETTER LII.

The Jealouſy of Swedes and Ruſſians of the Britiſh Officers in their Service.—Ruſſian Navy.—Daniſh and Swediſh Navies.—Propoſed Expedition of a Ruſſian Squadron round the World.—Anecdotes of Captain Trevenen —— 170

LETTER LIII.

Naval Campaign, Ruſſia with Sweden.—Action

Page

tion near Fredrickſham.—Capture of the Ruſſian Galley Fleet.—Action at Revel.—Defeat of the Swedes.—Action off Cronſtadt, between the Ruſſian and Swediſh Grand Fleets.—Defeat of the Swediſh Grand Fleet in Wyburg Bay.—Anecdote of Guſtavus III.—Defeat of the Ruſſian Galley Fleet under the Command of Prince Naſſau.—Anecdotes of the Britiſh Officers killed 180

LETTER LIV.

War threatened between Ruſſia and Great Britain.—Folly of War, and Advantages of Peace and Commercial Intercourſe between theſe Empires.—Impolicy of ſuffering Dantzic to be enſlaved by Pruſſia 210

LETTER LV.

Finniſh Peaſants.—Ruſſian Poſt Houſes.—Houſes.—Livonia.—Livonians.—Ruſſian Troops —— —— 228

LETTER LVI.

Of the Ruſſians.—Of the Germans, the Beauty of their Women.—Maſquerade at Riga.—Of the German Muſic.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Germans.—Of the River Dwina, and Harbour of Riga —— 241

LETTER

LETTER LVII.

Page

Extent and Variety of the Ruſſian Empire.—Courland.—Inns in Courland.—Mittau.—Neceſſary Subordinations of Ranks.—Reflections on Liberty and Tyranny.—State of Agriculture in Courland.—Courlanders.—Polanders.—Poliſh Pruſſia.—Memel 256

LETTER LVIII.

The Hiſtory of Poland —— —— 280

LETTER LIX.

Hiſtory of Poland continued —— 299

LETTER LX.

The ſame —— —— —— 326

LETTER LXI.

The ſame —— —— —— 359

LETTER LXII.

Hiſtory of Poland concluded —— 385

LETTER LXIII.

Voyage from Pruſſia to England —— 435

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

VOYAGE AROUND THE ISLANDS OF DENMARK.

LETTER I.

Page

Voyage in the North Sea.—Elſineur.—Deſcription of the City of Copenhagen.—Account of the Swediſh Finlanders.—Of the Daniſh Hollanders.—Anecdotes of the Court.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Danes —— —— —— 441

LETTER II.

Voyage around the Daniſh Iſlands.—Mona.—Famerew.—Alſen.—Langeland.—Funen.—Face of Nature throughout theſe Countries.—Great Belt.—Faaborg.—Trade of the Daniſh Iſlands.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Danes —— —— 459

LETTER III.

Voyage along the Coaſt of Jutland.—Account of Jutland, &c. —— —— 471

LET-

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LETTER XXXVIII.

Characteriſtics of different Nations.—Lapland Mythology.—Laplanders' Account of the Creation of the World and the Origins of Nations.—Superſtition has given the fineſt Ideas to ancient and modern Poets and Painters.—Of the Miſſionaries ſent into Lapland.—The Reflections of barbarous Nations upon the Religion of civilized Nations.—Anecdote of an Indian Merchant at Quebec.—Lapland Deities and Wiſe Men.—Of the ancient Religion of the North.—Of Odiniſm.—Of Mahomediſm—The Voluſpa, an ancient Poem deſcriptive of the Deſtruction of the World.

Ingria, June 1791.

IN my laſt letters to you, I took a ſhort review of the economy of the Laplanders, and gave you a liſt of the natural curioſities under the pole.

The Laplander, clothed in his bear-ſkin, and treading among his ſnows, is perhaps one of the happieſt beings in this world. The natives of every country have their partialities to the ſpot which gave them birth, and to their own particular excellencies. The Scotch and Engliſh are for ever proclaiming the ſuperiority of their countries and the achievements of their inhabitants, and boaſting of the greater number of murders committed, the one upon the other, under the banners of their ſeveral tyrants. The Spaniards, as the conquerors of the Saracens and of the new world; the French, the Portugueſe, the German, the Dane, the Swede, the Ruſſian, have each their boaſt of excellence in ſome reſpect or other. Not one nation boaſts of ſuperior moral virtues: at leaſt, they will give up this point, if they or their anceſtors are allowed

the firſt rank in war; that their anceſtors have been the moſt celebrated banditti of old times; and that they are the ſons of their fathers. The Laplanders, who, by the by, are the greateſt cowards upon earth, and who never venture to ſpill the blood of any animal but of the bear, the rein-deer, and a few other quadrupeds, boaſt of their courage and exemplary heroiſm *in former ages*. They are now only poſſeſſed of virtue; but the Laplander, as if to prove his origin from the ſame ſource with other nations, is more tenacious of his former than of his preſent character. The virtues he poſſeſſes are local: they ſeem to have exiſted at the pole before his arrival; he did not bring them with him. The virtues of all men are rather local than mental. There are few inflexible to evil example, and obſtinately juſt.

Let me trace the Laplander in his ſimple walk through life. Of his origin I will permit him to ſpeak for himſelf.

God, ſay they, before he created the world, conſulted with Perkel or Satan, in

what form it ſhould be made, and what were to be the fitteſt productions for the ſubſiſtence of men. God himſelf intended to fill the lakes with milk inſtead of water, and that every vegetable ſhould bear the moſt choice fruit, and that the larger kind, as trees, ſhould diſtil marrow.

—— The ſacred ground
Shall weeds and pois'nous herbs refuſe to bear;
Each common buſh ſhall Syrian roſes wear;
Unlabour'd harveſts ſhall the fields adorn,
And cluſter'd grapes ſhall bluſh on every thorn.
The knotted oaks ſhall ſhowers of honey weep,
And thro' the matted graſs the liquid gold ſhall creep.
No keel ſhall cut the waves for foreign ware,
For every ſoil ſhall every product bear.
The lab'ring hind his oxen ſhall disjoin,
No plough ſhall hurt the glebe, no pruning-hook the vine.
Nor wool ſhall in diſſembled colours ſhine:
But the luxurious father of the fold,
With native purple or unborrowed gold,
Beneath his pompous fleece ſhall proudly ſweat,
And under Tyrian robes the lamb ſhall bleat.

DRYDEN's Virgil.

The devil threw in ſome objection to this plan, and the world, with its herbs, its fruits and flowers, was created as it is now found.

found. This is the Lapland tradition of the creation of the world, and of the fall of man, and the ſubſequent calamities. Tradition has likewiſe handed down to them the hiſtory of the flood. The crimes of mankind, continues the Laponian chronology, provoked God, who in a violent paſſion turned the world topſy turvy. The ſeas, the lakes, the rivers, were thrown upon dry land, and ſwallowed up and deſtroyed all the children of men, and all animals, one man and woman only excepted. This was a brother and ſiſter. Their near relationſhip forbade the idea of procreating a new race of mortals: they ſeparated in hopes of finding, the one a huſband, the other a wife, of ſome other family ſaved from the general wreck. They travelled for a long time without ſucceſs. They met accidentally: again they ſeparated to renew the ſearch; when, after a long abſence, accident again brought them together, and, not knowing each other, they cohabited: and from them are deſcended the Poſt-diluvians.

The Laplanders do the Swedes the ho-

nour to acknowledge them for their couſins. Theſe two nations are deſcended from two brothers, but they were of very different diſpoſitions. Journeying one day during a dreadful ſtorm, the brother from whom the Swedes are deſcended took ſhelter under a tree. God, pitying his ſituation, changed the tree into a houſe. From this cowardly fellow are deſcended all nations but the Laplanders. The father of the Laplanders, more courageous and hardy, continued his journey towards Lapland. He braved the wintry blaſts, and climbed undaunted the ſnowy mountains, puſhing his way through the tempeſts of hail, until he arrived in that country whoſe inhabitants owe to him their exiſtence and *their courage.* The Laplanders are undoubtedly of the ſame origin with the Finlanders: both of them had been driven out from the more ſouthern provinces of the North, by the anceſtors of the preſent Ruſſians, Swedes and Danes. A few excepted, the Laplanders are idolaters; and even thoſe who have been prevailed upon to profeſs Chriſtianity have

not

not entirely renounced their former idolatries. The human mind very early receives the impreſſion of fear, and fear is ever excited by the idea of the exiſtence of ſome creature ſuperior to us in ſtrength, wiſdom, or other excellencies. The ignorant mind cannot ſee its Creator, and, ſtruck with unuſual objects, it finds a god in them. The eye of reaſon is ſlow in its movements; the eye of ſenſe is inſtantly attached, and every unuſual object ſtrikes it forcibly. We find the Laplander worſhipping all the phenomena of nature: not a vapoury cloud ariſes from the marſhes but is pregnant as it were with ſome genius or devil. The hot ſprings, the lightning, thunder, the aurora borealis, furniſh lodgings for ſome ſpirit or other. The ſun, moon, and ſtars, apparently ſuperior in height and uniform and uſeful ſplendour, contain of conſequence the ſuperior beings. The ſun, the firſt in magnificent ſhow, we ſhall find, is worſhipped by all barbarous nations, as containing, or as being of itſelf, the ſupreme deity. The clouds are a drapery with

which all ancient and modern idolaters have clothed their deities. The Grecian and Roman poets have decorated their gods and goddeſſes in clouds, without telling us ſimply, that the people worſhipped the vapours ariſing from the marſhes and lakes. I hazard this obſervation, for I do not recollect at this moment, whether the ancient Grecians did ſo or not. The earlieſt and the lateſt painters adopted the poetical hint: and we find every ſupernatural figure dreſſed in ſymbols of Grecian and Lapland mythology. The ſovereigns of Lapland are at a conſiderable expence in ſending miſſionaries among the natives, to inſtruct them in the tenets of the Chriſtian religion; yet, after a long period has expired, the Laplanders remain nearly in their original ſtate. I apprehend that theſe miſſionaries, or the coloniſts who ſettled in Lapland, give better precept than example. The choice of miſſionaries and of coloniſts ſhould be made with care: ſucceſs in the reformation of the manners of the Laplanders depends more upon example than precept. Prieſts are

not

not always the beſt acquainted with mankind, and are not the moſt proper to be employed in the works of reforming and poliſhing ignorant nations. It is not enough merely to teach the Laplander the doctrines of Chriſtianity: he ſhould be taught, too, the value of induſtry and cleanlineſs. Miſſionaries frequently content themſelves with teaching their diſciples to count their beads, a ſort of indolent adoration befitting the votaries of the god of ſleep. The monaſteries and other religious ſeminaries over all the world are the nurſeries of ſloth. Were theſe religious fed with manna from heaven, they would be a leſs burthen, and might be equally uſeful to ſociety. The Almighty does not ſeem to have intended that any of his creatures ſhould exiſt here upon prayers. This earth is certainly *the nurſery of mankind*; and, whatever may be our occupations when tranſplanted to other earths, here induſtry is as requiſite as religion. The human mind, as now conſtructed, feels diſguſt with continued religious or any other duties; it is an ocean which

which ſtagnates with a calm, and muſt be toſſed about with winds and with tempeſts.

The following anecdotes will illuſtrate the propriety of giving barbarous nations the examples as well as the precepts of religion, morality, and induſtry. A chief of one of the North American tribes was ſolicited to admit a French miſſionary to convert more of his ſubjects. "No," ſaid the chief: "there are too many converted already; my praying ſubjects have all of them "forgot to pay me their taxes."

A Britiſh American prieſt attempting to convert an Indian, the inhabitant of the foreſt turned ſhort upon him, and replied ſharply: "When I find that the Engliſh are "good by means of the religion they profeſs, I will then adopt the ſame. When I "go to Quebec to ſell my furs," continued the Indian, "the towns-people do not aſk "me to their houſes, and entertain me as "we do them. When they viſit our country, we kindle a fire to warm the ſtranger, we ſpread a matt upon which vi-

"ands

" ands are heaped for his food, and, when
" the hour of reſt draws near, furs for his
" bed and his repoſe. What is our return
" from the Chriſtians? If I enter their
" houſes and call for victuals and drink,
" they enquire whether or not I have got
" money to pay for them; and ſhew me an
" account of the expence, inſtead of taking
" friendly farewel when I am going to de-
" part. The fur merchant at whoſe houſe I
" called, upon the ſabbath, told me he would
" tranſact no commercial buſineſs upon that
" holy day; at the ſame time, he hinted,
" that he would not give me above a certain
" price for the furs. He went to church,
" at which I much rejoiced, ſeeing the
" good things he was to hear might
" ſoften his heart, and induce him to give
" me a more conſcientious price. Having
" nothing to do, I went to church likewiſe:
" but the congregation ſtared at me ſo, that
" I went out again, and waited at the
" church door for my merchant. I could
" hear the prieſt ſpeaking with great vehe-
" mence; No doubt, ſaid I to myſelf, he is

" deſiring

"desiring them to be honest and fair in "their dealings, both to their god and to "the Indians. Well, my merchant at last "came out: I asked him if he would give "me a higher price: to my astonishment "he offered less than before. Now it was "evident from this what the priest had "been saying, *and that you Christians go to* "*church only to learn how to cheat the Indians* "*in the price of beaver.*"

The visits of the missionaries, and of the lowest orders of traders, are the only sources of information and instruction yet opened to the Laplanders: it may therefore easily be conceived what progress they have made, or are likely to make. The religious ceremonies of the natives are evidently the same with those of the Tartars, but fewer in number and less pompous. If possible, they are more superstitious, more rude, and barbarous, yet at the same time a more innocent and harmless race than their Tartar fathers. Every Laplander, besides his wooden gods, awkwardly enough constructed, is provided with a living deity or supernatural monitor

monitor in a coat of a black colour. This wiſeacre is conſidered as the principal piece of furniture in every Lapland manſion; a perſonage of great ſkill in all difficult caſes. The *media* which the ſons of men have choſen in all ages, as ſolicitors and attorneys between them and their God, muſt rather entertain than provoke the ſupreme deity. The ancient poets have gloſſed over the idols and idolatrous ceremonies of their ages: the enchantment of verſe has reconciled us to Jupiter and Vulcan, to Juno and Venus; while the deities of the Tartars, and other rites, when ſpoken of in ſimple proſe, give frequently diſguſt. Thoſe deities were nearly all the ſame, but with other names; they had the ſame origin in the vagaries of human imagination.

The Laplanders and Siberians have their wiſe men too; but they are not limited to ſeven, and may be found and conſulted with in every village: the fee of conſultation is a glaſs of brandy. Theſe philoſophical prophets, having prepared a drum, with various myſtical figures painted upon it,

it, and hung round it, work themſelves, by the aid of brandy, into a fit, and pronounce, upon their recovery, the decrees of Providence. All religious ſects have contrived to command the attention of their diſciples, and of the world, by making as much noiſe as poſſible. The Ruſſians, the near relations of the Tartars, have exchanged the drum for a dozen of bells: the Pope of Rome is the drum-major of Italy, of Spain, and ſome other nations. There are few ſectaries of Chriſtians who follow the example of their great founder; whoſe words and actions were dictated by the God of ſincerity and peace. Odin, the firſt king of the North, diſcerned the influence which religious enthuſiaſm had over the minds of his people: he joined the office of prieſt to that of king. The patriarchs of Ruſſia and Greece are ſtill habited in imperial robes. When the Grecian and Roman empires and emperors exiſted no longer, the prieſts ſeized upon their robes; the wolves dreſſed themſelves in the ſkins of the lions, and continued to practiſe their tyranny, but without any mixture of

that

that magnanimity which ſometimes diſtinguiſhed the nobler deſpots.

The religion of the ancient Scandinavians, before the arrival of Odin from Scythia, would appear to have been very ſimple: they worſhipped the ſun, in which they ſuppoſed the chief deity to exiſt. Under this ſupreme god were various others, who preſided over the ſeas, the lakes, the mountains, and foreſts; to all of whom they offered ſacrifice of brute-animals and fruits, upon ruſtic altars, conſiſting of one or more large ſtones gathered together, and ſet upright upon their ends. At Odin's arrival, this ſimplicity of worſhip was changed; not for a more refined, but a leſs innocent mode of worſhip.

Odin aſſumed the deity; and after *his death*, the Goths could not offer to warrior gods fruits and flowers: nay, the blood of beaſts was deemed too mean an offering, and human victims were dragged to the altars.

Frigga, the wife of Odin, was the goddeſs of pleaſures, the mother of fruitfulneſs, at the ſame time the Juno, the Venus, and the

the Ceres of the North. The ſons and daughters of Odin were the inferior deities. Thor was the god of thunder and of battle, and next to him Tyr, another warrior god. From theſe divinities, we have the names of the days of the week: Odin, who is ſometimes called Woden, was worſhipped upon Wodenſday or Wedneſday, Thurſday was ſacred to Thor, Tyſday or Tueſday to Tyr, and Friday to Frigga. The Norwegian, Swediſh, German, and Daniſh names for the days of the week come ſtill nearer to the names of theſe great perſonages. The conqueſts of the Goths in Italy ſoon introduced into Scandinavia another change of religion; but there continued for a long time ſuch a mixture of Paganiſm with Chriſtianity, that it is difficult to fix the period of the converſion of the Gothic nations. Though Rome failed in conquering the Goths, ſhe ſucceeded in the beginning and in the end in conquering their deities. She chaſed Odin out of Scythia, and again out of Scandinavia, by giving the inhabitants of the latter her religion.

Rome

Rome after her fall, ſtill thirſting for empire of any ſort, hung herſelf round with beads and croſſes. She had perceived the great influence which the Gothic prieſts had obtained over the people. She reſolved to outdo their barbarous rites; and attracted attention, by decorating, with the moſt glaring and coſtly ornaments, the Chriſtian faith, which at this period, like the morning, began to dawn from the eaſt.

The mortal inventors of religion addreſſed themſelves to the ſenſual paſſions of men. Chriſtianity, not offering the ſame kind of rewards, had a long ſtruggle with Odiniſm and Mahomediſm. Odin conſtructed his heaven for rough barbarous warriors: Mahomed for the brave, but more luxurious Aſiatics. Such heavens ſuited the reſpective followers of the impoſtors. The elyſium and the hell of Odin were placed in this world. Theſe are to be deſtroyed, and all the inferior deities, nay, even Odin himſelf, who, by the by, only aſſumed the ſamerank with Mahomed, the chief prophet of the ſupreme God. Odin and his

ſons are to riſe with a new world, and with them all good men, whether warrior or peaſant, and this is their everlaſting abode. The diſtinguiſhing reward of brave men, was, to paſs their time agreeably to their inclinations in elyſium, until the creation of the new world: the lower orders of the people were to be leſs agreeably ſituated, I do not remember where, during the interval between their death and their reſurrection.

I will conclude theſe anecdotes of the religion of the northern natives with an extract from an ancient poem, entitled The Voluſpa, giving a deſcription of the conflagration of the world, and its renewal from its aſhes.

VOLUSPA.

The giant Rymer arrives from the eaſt, carried in a chariot—the ocean ſwells—the great ſerpent rolls himſelf furiouſly in the waters, and lifteth up the ſea—The eagle ſcreams, and tears the dead bodies with his horrid beak—The veſſel of the gods is ſet afloat; the veſſel comes from the eaſt. The hoſt of the evil genii arrives by ſea—Lake [Satan] is their

their pilot and director—Their furious ſquadron advances—The black prince of the genii of fire iſſues from the ſouth, ſurrounded with flames—the ſwords of the gods beam forth rays like the ſun—the rocks are ſhaken, and fall to pieces—the female giants wander about weeping—men tread in crowds the paths of death—the heaven is ſplit aſunder.

New grief for the goddeſs who defends Odin! For Odin advances to encounter Fenris; the ſnow-white ſlayer of Bela, againſt the black prince of the genii of fire. Soon is the ſpouſe of Frigga beaten down. Then runs Vidar, the illuſtrious ſon of Odin, to avenge his father. He attacks the murderous monſter, that monſter born of a giant! and with his ſword he pierces him to the heart.

The ſun is darkened—the ſea overwhelms the earth—the ſhining ſtars vaniſh out of heaven—the fire furiouſly rages—the ages draw to an end—the flame aſcending licks the vault of heaven. Then we ſee emerge from the boſom of the waves an earth clothed with a moſt lovely verdure—the floods retire

—the eagle ſoars wherever he liſts, and ſeizes his fiſhy prey on the tops of the mountains—the fields produce their fruit without culture—misfortunes are baniſhed from the world. Balder and his brother, thoſe warrior gods, return to inhabit the ruined palaces of Odin. Do ye conceive what will then come to paſs?

The gods aſſemble in the fields of Ida; they diſcourſe together concerning the heavenly palaces, whoſe ruins are before them; they recollect their former converſations, and the antient diſcourſes of Odin.

A palace more reſplendent than the ſun riſes to the view; it is adorned with a roof of gold: there the aſſemblies of good men ſhall inhabit, and give themſelves up to joy for all ages.

LETTER XXXIX.

Cuſtoms and Manners of the Laplanders.—Lapland Courtſhip.—Lapland Language.—Of their Marriages.—Reſemblance of Lapland with Aſiatic Manners.—Manufactures.—Navigating the Rivers very dangerous.—M. Pallas's Account of the Birch-tree, and of its various Uſes, and even as a Food to the Northerns.—Diſeaſes and Remedies—Dreſs.—Offer their Women to Strangers.—Their Love of Money.—Le Monnier's Deſcription of Aurora Borealis.—Anecdote of Mr. Howard.—Severity of the Lapland Climate.—Le Monnier's picturesque Deſcription of the Face of Nature in Lapland.

Ingria, June 1791.

THE ſea Laplanders and the mountain Laplanders differ conſiderably from each other in cuſtoms and manners. The ſea

Laplander, or fiſherman, is more ſtationary than the other, and, in ſome reſpects, more comfortably ſituated, though not ſo rich as the mountaineer, whoſe numerous herds of rein-deer afford him every neceſſary of life.

One rein-deer cow becomes the property of a child as ſoon as it is born. The calves of this cow are carefully preſerved, and the young Laplander finds a valuable eſtate belonging to him, when he arrives at the age of diſcretion, and when he is qualified to begin the trade of his fathers. But, among the Laplanders, as among other northern nations, a man is not looked upon to be properly eſtabliſhed in the world before he is married. A Lapland youth, whether inſpired by love's ſweet flame, or enamoured with jointure-land, commences his ſuit by preſenting the young lady with rich furs or ſuch articles, and the parents with brandy. Upon this momentous occaſion, and in his journey to the hut of his laſs, which is ſometimes at a great diſtance, the lover is accompanied with a friend. The dying ſwain allows this friend to

go

go firſt into the cottage: he remains in the cold fields, and waits with equal patience and anxiety to hear of his fate. The ſalute upon entering their houſes is by inclining the head, and by naming the inhabitants holy brothers, or holy ſiſters.

If the brandy is accepted by the parents, and the eloquent ſpeech delivered by this love-token approved of, the young man, covered with a wolf-ſkin, is deſired to approach. Encouraged by this dawn of hope, he ſtrokes his forehead, and makes an oration upon the beauty and high-accompliſhments of his intended bride, as his procurator had immediately before upon the wealth and courage of the ſuitor. Should it happen that the young couple are neither of them rich, they remain for ſome time with the bride's parents, and until they have acquired, by their induſtrious exertions, a ſufficient ſtock.

If, after matters have been agreed upon, the bride retract from her engagements, the parents are obliged to return every preſent made during the courtſhip, and to pay the

expence which the bridegroom had been put to in brandy and other articles, in entertainments. Scheffer has given us ſome ſpecimens of the Lapland love-ſongs, which have eſtabliſhed the character of the Lapland poetry; but their ſinging is not equal to their poetry: their voice is harſh and ſqueaking. The Laponian language by the accounts of ſome writers is uncouth; others report it to be ſoft and expreſſive. M. Leem compiled a dictionary of the Lapland language, and we owe to him the moſt credit for the latter character of it. It has ſeveral terms to expreſs the different kinds of roads and mountains, and to diſtinguiſh the age, the bulk, the fatneſs, the ſwiftneſs, or other property or excellence of the rein-deer. The moods of the verbs are more numerous than in any other language; and there are thirteen different caſes of their nouns ſubſtantive.

But the Laponian is not the only language of barbarians which contains excellencies equal, if not ſuperior, to thoſe of more poliſhed nations. The language of the ſa-

vage

vage Hurons of North America is celebrated by travellers for its ſtrength and pathos, and the Algonquin tongue for its ſoftneſs and elegance.

The original ceremonials of marriage in Lapland were very ſimple, and required only the conſent of the parties, and a lucky day to cohabit together: thoſe among them who have been converted to Chriſtianity permit the Ruſſian, Swediſh, or Norwegian prieſt to unite their hands.

The newly married couple being arrived in their hut commence the buſineſs of life. The huſband attends to his herds or to his fiſhing, as his ſituation may be upon the mountains or by the ſea ſhore. The wife is employed within doors in manufacturing not only all articles of dreſs, but in making furniture, as cradles, ſpoons, ſhovels, and diſhes of various ſorts; the huſband aſſiſts in theſe manufactures when at leiſure. The Laplanders uſe no chairs: like their anceſtors in Aſia, they ſit croſs-legged upon mats or ſkins laid upon the floor, which ſerve, at the ſame time, for the table-cloth at dinner

and

and other meals. Theſe likewiſe compoſe their beds. It is amuſing to contemplate ſimilarity of cuſtoms between two people now ſo oppoſite in many reſpects: to view the luxurious Aſiatic ſitting in all the pomp of the Eaſt at a magnificent banquet, ſerved up in diſhes of gold and ſilver in his palace in the plains of Indoſtan, and to behold the rude Laplander ſeated upon his hams too in his hut under the pole, and devouring the carcaſe of a bear or a wolf. The landlord and landlady occupy the place neareſt the fire, the ſons and daughters of the family the next adjoining apartment, and the ſervants the outer chamber. The Lapland bedrooms may be eaſily ſuppoſed to be none of the moſt ſuperb; and it is only the houſes of the wealthy that are divided into three apartments by means of boards, or coarſe cloths or ſkins. In more ordinary habitations, the whole inhabitants repoſe themſelves around the fire-place with little diſtinction: but this cuſtom is not attended with the conſequences which delicacy may apprehend. It may ſeem ſtrange that a peo-

ple

ple ſo low in civilization and in rank in ſociety ſhould have ſervants among them; and that a nation ſo near upon an equality ſhould have inferiors: but here, as in other countries, riches, of whatever ſpecies, conſtitute degrees of rank: a Laplander without a herd of rein-deer is a poor man, and becomes a ſervant of him who has numerous herds. Herds of rein-deer are in Lapland as landed eſtates are elſewhere: the perſons who do not poſſeſs them, are in the ſituation of ſervants, merchants, and manufacturers, dependent, and ſearching every where, and into every branch, for employment.

The Laplanders are no leſs ingenious than the Norwegians and Finlanders in making various wooden utenſils. The largeſt of this ſpecies of manufacture are their boats or canoes with which they navigate their rivers, rendered exceedingly dangerous by falls. Theſe canoes are of two kinds; either conſtructed out of one entire piece of timber, or built with thin bark of trees ſewed together, and the ſeam caulked with moſs inſtead of oakum: were the canoes built of

plank

plank they would not anſwer, ſince it requires a veſſel capable of yielding to the ſtony bottom, as well as to the violent and whirling current and whirlpools in the river. The firſt ſort of canoes are uſed only upon the lakes. The canoes of bark are ſo ſmall and light, as to be carried even by one perſon from river to river as occaſion requires; and the Laplander, having borne his veſſel acroſs the land, is carried in his turn upon the waters by this ſort of portable navy common to many Indian nations.

The trunk and bark of the birch tree are to the natives as uſeful in the vegetable, as their rein-deer in the animal world. The Tartars apply it to a ſtill greater variety of purpoſes.

"The birch," ſays M. Pallas, "is one of "the moſt uſeful trees in the northern world. "The wood not only ſerves for fuel and "various œconomical purpoſes, but from the "crooked trees, and parts of trees, are made "wheels and other articles that require very "hard timber. The outer white bark, boiled, "and ſewed together, is uſed by ſome Tartars

"for

" for covering their huts and tents: by others
" for making portable canoes, cradles, cheſts,
" water-caſks, and a variety of kitchen furni-
" ture: and by the Ruſſians for thoſe uſeful
" and durable veſſels in which they preſerve
" their meat and liquors. This bark may
" be taken off, without hurting the tree, in
" a certain manner, and is thus uſed for diſ-
" tilling the birch-oil. The inner bark when
" bruiſed, is eaten by the Kamtſchatkadales;
" and when boiled with alum, it tinges wool
" of an iron colour. A yellow dye is ob-
" tained from the leaves. The knots of the
" trunk are of uſe to the turner. The juice
" dropping from the wounded ſtem at the
" time when the buds are forming, affords
" a moſt grateful drink, not only when
" recent, but when fermented with honey;
" and when growing ſour it is made into
" ſugar. The birch oil, to which the cele-
" brated Ruſſia leather owes its agreeable
" ſmell, is prepared from the white bark,
" either taken from the live tree, or from
" trees that lie putrid in the woods. It is
" beſt when made of the latter ſort, becauſe,

" by

" by the putrefaction it is freed from the
" inner bark, and the external white bark
" remains uncorrupted for ages, as appears
" from the old burial places at Ieniſea, and
" the vaults of the very antient caſtle at Moſ-
" cow, which, I obſerved, were covered with
" birch bark. The bark is gathered into a
" heap, and preſſed into pits made in the
" ſhape of a funnel prepared in a clay ſoil,
" and when ſet on fire is covered with turf.
" The oil, diſtilling through the clay-hole at
" the bottom of the funnel, drops into a
" veſſel placed to receive it, and is then put
" into caſks made of the hollowed trunk of
" a tree. The pure limpid oil ſwims at top,
" and is in the greateſt requeſt for anointing
" leather on account of its antiſeptic quality.
" The reſiduum is thick and ſooty, and is
" employed for various common uſes. The
" pure birch oil does not ſeem deſtitute of
" medical virtues, and is often uſed by the
" common people both internally and ex-
" ternally, particularly in venereal caſes."

The Laplanders in their canoes will ſail down very rapid falls of the rivers, guiding the

the canoe as well as they can with the oars; the foaming ſtream daſhing around them, and covering them from the ſight. When before the wind, they ſubſtitute for a ſail the leafy branch of a tree.

The Laplanders no leſs excel in the ingenious ſimplicity of other manufactures and arts. They make thread, as already obſerved, from the tendons of the rein-deer; ſhoes, boots, and gloves, of his ſkin: of the horns of this animal they make ſnuff-boxes, ſpoons, and *almanacks*, marking upon the horn certain notches for days, weeks, and months; and by this uncommon regiſter they keep an exact account of the ſeaſons of the year.

Large and ſmaller ropes they make from the thready roots of trees, and from a ſea weed they furniſh a wick for their lamps. Their bows, arrows, and lances are made of birch, and handſomely ornamented with carved work. I have formerly noticed, that the Laplanders, having few earthly ſubſtances for manufactures and trade, employed aërial matter, and retailed out thun-

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der and lightning, hail and ſtorms, or fair weather and ſunſhine, as they were in demand.

While a Laplander provides himſelf with a bow of timber, he furniſhes the Deity with one of a very ſuperb ſtructure. It is with the rainbow, ſays the ingenious and poetical Laplander, that the good beings ſhoot the malevolent ſpirits of the mountains, the woods and lakes. The Laplanders are excellent bow-and-lance-men. I muſt add to the liſt of Laponian manufactures that of magical drums, curiouſly made, and painted with various emblematical figures. Though the pagan *doctors* among them are the regular profeſſors of the art infernal, yet every Laplander is a dabbler in his way; and, whatever other wealth they may have to beſtow upon their children, they never fail to teach them the myſterious or occult ſciences, and with as much care as parents in other countries procure for their ſons Greek, Latin, Mathematics, French, &c.

The diſeaſes of the inhabitants of the

northern deſerts are few, and the remedies for them ſimple. The *doctors* are their phyſicians both for the ſoul and body; they are their lawyers too: no wonder then, that, uniting in their perſons the three moſt lucrative branches of trade-religion, law, and phyſic, they ſhould be rich. An apothecary's ſhop in this country, excluſively of magical medicines, contains few articles beſides herbs and whale oil. The diſeaſes prevalent are the ſmall pox, and pains in the eyes from the continual reflection of the ſnow. When a Laplander returns from hunting, he is unable to ſee, or to lift his eye-lids, for ſome hours or even days. For the ſmall-pox they drink the blood of the rein-deer, and make outward application of boiled herbs. When any limb of the body is in pain, they hold the affected part to the fire until it burſts and bleeds.

The Lapland women, and indeed the women of Greenland and other countries beyond the arctic circle, are not troubled with ſome complaints peculiar to the ſex;

and, what appears an uncommon remedy, they drink large draughts of oil for ſome time before child-birth, which they pretend render their labours eaſy. But oil is the favourite beverage of the northerns, as well as brandy: and the Lapland lady in the ſtraw no doubt takes this opportunity of obtaining what ſhe likes beſt. Brandy and oil are the caudles uſed at Lapland chriſtenings.

The wealthy Laplanders are dreſſed in a richer manner than the poorer claſſes: the ladies in particular indulge in all the ſplendour of beads, pebbles, and gilt wire. The ſkin of the black fox affords a dreſs truly elegant. It is ſaid that the Laplanders are not jealous huſbands: that on the contrary they offer their women to handſome ſtrangers. Squat, black, and deformed themſelves, they probably adopt this plan to improve the breed of ſons and daughters. Perhaps the ladies are the moſt forward in theſe negotiations. The manners of a Lapland huſband are not entirely according to the wiſhes of the fair ſex; yet they have

their ideas of good breeding, as well as of the affectation of it: and when a youthful Laplander dreſſes in finer furs than his rank may entitle him to do, they ſay that ſuch a perſon gives himſelf the airs of a gelded rein-deer. Theſe animals, being remarkable for their fatneſs, being fed for ſlaughter, and not worked, are always in high ſpirits and friſky.

A Laplander, having provided for his family, and ſettled them in the world, is anxious to preſerve what riches are left, in coin, which he hides in ſome ſecret place, or under ground, as a proviſion for himſelf in the next world. Yet he is not parſimonious, like the Tartars. The Laplanders contribute to aſſiſt a neighbour reduced to poverty; and, as among the Norwegian peaſants, frequently preſent ſilver and gold in a plate to diſtinguiſhed gueſts, deſiring them to take what they chooſe. Theſe are exactly Aſiatic cuſtoms: neither juſtice nor injuſtice can be procured in Aſia without money: the magiſtrate is bribed to do his duty, and the aſſaſſin to execute his commiſſion.

It is the reward of every meritorious as well as the incitement to every baſe action. Viſits and embaſſies are preceded by preſents: theſe are the media not only of commerce, but of politics, and of every tranſaction—the price of vice and of virtue too. This picture of Aſiatic manners under the pole, though coarſe, is ſtriking. — There are ſeveral mountains here containing veins of gold and ſilver, which are ſometimes worked by the reſpective governments.

I have attempted, with the ſtricteſt regard to the beſt accounts and information, this ſketch of the cuſtoms and manners of a race of men little known. There are few nations ſo neglected by nature as not to have it in their power, by ſhaking off indolence and vicious habits, to be happier than they actually are; and few from whom others may not draw inſtructive leſſons, however ſtupid and ignorant they may appear at firſt ſight.

Every traveller into Lapland deſcribes with raptures the enchanting proſpects preſented to the eye of the admirer of nature,

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in winter, as well as in ſummer. During the former period, not only the moon, but the aurora borealis, throws a flame of light over the frozen lands and ſeas. The icy precipices ſparkle in the moon-beams, and appear as if hung around with diamond lamps. The ſnowy mountains riſe one above the other, and are hardly to be diſtinguiſhed from the clouds of heaven, unleſs where the black foreſts dot their ſides. The moon, the ſteady lamp of night, is dimly ſeen amidſt the brighter diſplay of the aurora borealis. Le Monnier, one of the companions of M. Maupertuis in their travels through Lapland, after relating a perilous journey acroſs frozen mountains, thus continues: "If the earth in "this climate be thus horrible, the heavens "preſent to the eye a proſpect moſt beauti-"ful. So ſoon as night approaches, fires of "a thouſand different colours and figures "light up the firmament, as if intended by "nature to lengthen out the ſhort winter "day, and to ſupply the abſence of the "ſun. Theſe lights have not, as in more

" ſoutherly climates, any conſtant ſituation,
" though you may often ſee a luminous
" arch fixed towards the north. They
" ſeem moſt commonly to overſpread the
" whole heavens. Sometimes they begin
" in the ſhape of an immenſe ſcarf of light,
" with its extremities reſting on the hori-
" zon; and, with a motion like that of a fiſh-
" net, glide ſwiftly up the ſkies, preſerving
" in this progreſs a direction nearly per-
" pendicular to the meridian. Moſt com-
" monly, ſucceeding theſe preludes, all the
" lights unite at the zenith, repreſenting in
" form the top of a crown: their figure
" and motion exactly reſemble the waving
" of colours, and their different tints of
" light repreſent the ſort of taffeties which
" we call changeable.

" Sometimes they paint a corner of the
" ſky a ſcarlet colour; and upon the 18th
" of December the whole conſtellation of
" Orion looked as if it had been dipped
" in blood. The light, which was fixed
" at firſt, ſoon was in motion; and, changing
" into other colours of violet and blue, ſet-

" tled

" tled into a dome, whoſe top ſtood towards " the ſouth-weſt of the zenith. The " moon ſhone bright, but did not in the " leaſt efface it. In this country, where " there are lights of ſo many varying hues, " I never ſaw more than two that were " red, and ſuch are taken for preſages of " great calamities; and when we look upon " theſe phenomena with an unphiloſophical " eye, no wonder that we diſcover fiery " chariots, armies engaged, and other " dreadful appearances."

The Lapland winter, with all its rigours of cold, has its advantages and conveniencies, and is indeed a more deſirable ſeaſon than the ſummer, in which the inhabitants, both men and cattle, are tormented with the gnats or muſquitoes. I have already noticed that the Laplander anoints his body with a preparation of oily ſubſtance and rein-deer milk, to prevent the attack of this inſect. They cannot all of them afford this ointment; and the herdſmen, while attending the cattle, make a fire, and, ſitting amidſt the ſmoke, evade the foe. The cure, if we recollect the ſultry heat of the ſummer, when this method

is practiſed, is almoſt as bad as the diſeaſe. The celebrated Mr. Howard, whom I ſaw at Peterſburgh in 1789, complained much of the pain he ſuffered from the gnats. A Ruſſian gentleman, who wiſhed to diſplay his wit, deſired Mr. Howard to get frequently drunk, which would heat his ſkin to that degree, that the gnat would certainly retreat at the firſt touch.

We may judge of the ſeverity of a Lapland winter, when we are informed that rivers are often frozen to ſeven feet in thickneſs; and of the contraſted heat in ſummer, in which the ſun for a conſiderable period is ſeen revolving round the heavens, frequently ſetting the woods on fire, and occaſioning ſuch a rapidity of vegetation that the grain is reaped in four and five weeks from the time it was ſowed. But there are few ſpots fit for agriculture: the ſoil of Lapland is thin, and for the moſt part mooriſh. The trees in the foreſt riſe only to a diminutive ſize, and even this the ſoil cannot ſupport. Theſe trees are found lying in every path, and interrupting the hunters.

Of the face of this country in ſummer Le Monnier

Monnier thus writes: "From the top of "the mountain Avaſcaxa the proſpect is "delightful and unbounded towards the "ſouth, in which direction we ſaw the "courſe of the river to a vaſt diſtance. "This view is terminated by a prodigious "number of mountains heaped the one "above the other, as if to repreſent chaos. "The north-eaſt ſide is a frightful preci-"pice, where the hawks build their neſts. "At the bottom runs the river Tenglio. "During a ſtay of ten days upon this "mountain Avaſcaxa, curioſity procured us "ſeveral viſits from the Laplanders, who "brought us fiſh and ſheep, and ſuch bad "fruit as their woods produced. On other "mountains we were ſtill more grievouſly "incommoded with the flies. The ſoldiers "who accompanied us, though accuſtomed "to every ſpecies of hardſhip, were fain to "cover their faces with tar or oil. The "muſquitoes ſettled in clouds upon their "victuals, and rendered them in a moment "uſeleſs. We croſſed ſeveral lakes and rivers "in our journey in ſmall canoes, and ſome-

"times

" times through dark and thick foreſts.
" The third lake we paſſed conveyed us to
" the foot of the mountain Neimi: the
" beautiful water pieces ſurrounding this
" mountain, arriving as we did through
" a dreary and dangerous journey, gave us
" the utmoſt pleaſure, and the effect of en-
" chantment to this elegant landſcape. The
" inſulated mountain appeared as the work
" of necromancy; and, were it not in Lap-
" land, would indeed be a moſt delightful
" place. On one hand you ſee a grove of
" trees riſe from a plain, ſmooth and level as
" the walks of a garden, and at ſuch a con-
" venient diſtance as not to interrupt the
" pleaſant walk we had through them, nor
" the proſpect of the lake waſhing the bor-
" ders.

" In the rocks upon the oppoſite ſide of
" the mountain, are formed, by the hand of
" nature, ſpacious apartments: and the rocks
" without theſe are ſo perpendicular, ſo
" high and ſo ſmooth, as to give the idea of
" the walls of ſome ſtrong fortreſs, or of an
" unfiniſhed palace. From the mountain's
" ſides

" ſides we obſerved thoſe vapours riſe from
" the marſhes and lakes which the Lapland-
" ers call Haltios, and which they believe
" to contain the guardian deities of the
" mountains."

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LETTER XL.

Attack made by the Swediſh Fleet upon a Ruſſian Squadron at Revel.—The Ruſſian Fleet fitted out at Cronſtadt in the courſe of a few Days, and ſails for the Gulph of Finland.

St. Peterſburg, June 1791.

YOU deſire to be informed of the truth reſpecting the naval campaign of the Swedes and Ruſſians in 1790; concerning which you have had various and contradictory reports. The operations of the Swediſh grand fleet began with an attack upon that part of the Ruſſian navy uſually laid up at Revel, and they conducted the enterpriſe with the ſame ſpirit which planned it; though, by an accident, it proved finally abortive. This attempt was made at a time when the principal ſquadrons of the Ruſſian navy were lying aground

aground and unrigged in the harbour of Cronſtadt. The Ruſſian fleet, conſiſting of only ten ſhips of the line, were in the utmoſt danger of being totally deſtroyed by the enemy's fleet, compoſed of twenty-two ſail, and manned with veteran ſeamen. The Swedes attribute their failure to a ſudden change of wind. They loſt two ſhips of the line, which got on ſhore, and were burnt by themſelves, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Ruſſians.

You cannot eaſily conceive the confuſion and terror at Peterſburgh, when the government were informed by expreſs of this daring aſſault; or of the joy and exultation here, when another expreſs conveyed the intelligence of the retreat of the Swediſh armada. The ſhips at Cronſtadt were neither rigged nor manned. There were only three ſhips afloat, and in the roadſtead, and even theſe few had been neceſſitated to land their guns before they could be brought out of harbour. The calm weather and other circumſtances occaſioned this lowneſs of the water. Here are no regular tides. Theſe depend

depend upon the courſe of the winds, and the high or low water in the gulph of Finland. For inſtance: when the wind is from the weſtward, or blowing from the Baltic towards Cronſtadt and Peterſburgh, it brings with it in rolling waves an increaſed collection of waters, and covers the dry ſea beach, from which the waters had retreated during eaſterly winds, or a long ſeries of calm or dry weather.

I found the inhabitants and ſeamen at Cronſtadt crowding on board their navy; the firſt to view the preparations going forward for their defence; the latter carrying their cheſts and baggage. I remained ſeveral days at Cronſtadt; and it was wonderful indeed, in the courſe of a few days to behold the whole of the Ruſſian fleet in the roadſtead, victualled, manned, and in every reſpect ready for meeting the enemies of the empire. I never before witneſſed ſuch exertion, or ſo grand a ſpectacle of vigour and power. Moſt of the ſhips in harbour had to land their guns, and again to have them put on board in the bay. Small fleets of

veſſels were ſeen daily arriving from Peterſburgh and Oranienbaum, loaded with all manner of proviſions and ſtores: upon their very decks were piled baggage, ſails, cordage, clothing of every kind for the ſeamen; innumerable jackets, trowſers, hats, ſtockings, ſhoes. The ſoldiers' arms added to this ſhow, muſkets, piſtols, ſwords, halberts, yet unſtained with blood, and newly brought from the ingenious manufactories of human miſery. Other veſſels were loaded with recruits from the inland villages, ſtaring wildly around them at theſe unuſual ſcenes, and curſing in their hearts the turbulent minds, the tyranny, and ambition of princes. Articles neceſſary to conciliate, or inſpire the hero's ſoul to murder and glory, lay ſcattered about: the thundering drum, the ear-piercing fife, the ſhrill trumpet, the ſtandards, and all the pride and pomp of villanous war. The ſtill face of the gulph echoed with the bawling of the ſailors: the boatſwains' whiſtles from every ſhip made the air ring. The cat-o'nine-tails ſounded upon the backs of training warriors; and this

this ſound, mixed with ſhrieks of the pupils of Mars and of Neptune, completed the ſcene. I ſupped with the ſurgeon to the Britiſh ſettlers in Cronſtadt. He was an Iriſhman, whoſe houſe and heart and cellar were open to every one. The company conſiſted of Britons, and we had *ſix bottles more* before we parted. It was with difficulty I found out my lodgings. As I traverſed the ſtreets, the Ruſſian ſentinels were calling their rounds, and paſſing the watch-word. I was no ſpy; ſo my mind was at eaſe, and I anſwered their watch-words with *Britannia rules the waves.* The Ruſſians know our way, and ſeldom obſerve ſtrict rules with Engliſhmen. My lodgings were ſhut up, and every animal within doors aſleep except the houſe-dog. He knew my voice: but he could not open the door. I wandered to the ramparts: the ſentinel was ſnoring aloud in his box; not one thought of war, or ambition, or victory diſturbed his mind. His rough countenance bore, as much as it was capable of, the ſmoothneſs of complacency and unreſiſting meekneſs.

Perhaps

Perhaps Catharine II, perhaps Guſtavus III, are at this moment in aweful ſuſpenſe of mind tumbling their pillow. The Swediſh fleet was approaching Cronſtadt. From the ramparts I journeyed to the piers, which, however are a ſort of continuation of ramparts, and planted with cannon. The whole Ruſſian fleet, in this quarter, lay directly without the piers, and ſome of them not fifty yards diſtant from the place where I was ſtanding. It conſiſted of ſeventeen ſail of the line; ſeven of which were one hundred gun ſhips. The ſummer nights in Ruſſia are never dark. I ſaw diſtinctly every object around me. Univerſal ſilence reigned, or was interrupted only by the calling of the ſentinels. The morning had not yet dawned upon the land and ſeas. At this moment I heard the ſound of martial muſic from the Admiral's ſhip. Silence again reſumed her ſeat—The horizon gradually reddened in the eaſt—the morning gun awoke the Ruſſian ſeamen to labour and war. The various ſcene created reflection, and reflection diſpelled the fumes of wine.

Crowds of people were daily flocking to Cronſtadt to view this armada. The officers were entertaining their friends on board, and dancing and ſinging together in the cabins, and in the ſtern galleries. The whole fleet ſailed before I left Cronſtadt, ſaluting the town and fortreſs, which returned their ſalute with repeated thunder from the ramparts. In a future letter I ſhall ſend you an account of the meeting of the hoſtile navies.

LETTER XLI.

Contraſt between Peterſburgh and London—Propoſed Improvements for the Britiſh Metropolis—Anecdote of Mr. Howard—Aſiatic Cuſtoms and Manners of the Ruſſians.

St. Peterſburgh, July 1791.

AMIDST theſe frozen regions, a ſtranger is ſurpriſed to find Aſiatic cuſtoms, and Aſiatic magnificence. Peterſburgh ſprings up amidſt the bogs of Finland, a ſecond Delhi, a ſecond Iſpahan. The compariſon holds equally near between the Aſiatic and the Northern ſovereigns. Who does not ſee a ſecond Arungzebe, a ſecond Tzinghis Khan in Peter; a ſecond Semiramis in Catharine of Anhault?

Like the aurora borealis, they have lighted up the northern deſerts; and the arts and ſciences have found their way to the pole.

Peterſburgh, ſo far as it is finiſhed, is the handſomeſt city in Europe; and one almoſt forgets the evils which too frequently attend arbitrary governments, when he beholds the noble regularity and elegance of a capital, which could have been executed only under an arbitrary ſovereign.

It is too great a degree of liberty, when a peeviſh or low-minded individual has it in his power to hurt the ſuperb deſigns of architecture, by interrupting the uniformity and elegance of cities by ſome mean building of his own planning. Is it not to be regretted that the firſt city in the world in point of wealth, on account of the cauſe alluded to ſhould be among the laſt in uniform elegance? London is rather a collection of houſes than a city: an aggregate of meanneſs and ſplendour. It may be urged, that elegance does not ſuit the convenience of trade: but Peterſburgh is a proof of the contrary. London itſelf is in many inſtances a proof of the contrary. The truth is, that elegance does not ſuit the low ideas of the generality of mercantile people,

and

and it requires the interference of a legiſlature to redeem our metropolis from the hands of traders. They are the moſt uſeful ſubjects of every ſtate, but they are bad engineers and architects.

The poets have told falſehoods in mentioning the exiſtence of river gods. If any exiſted, there muſt be ſome in the Thames: and if there were, they would forbid their ſtreams to paſs betwixt London and Southwark, and to waſh the dirty wharfs, and other conveniencies of trade which diſgrace its banks. The celebrated Adam, in that noble building the Adelphi, has given a pattern for the improvement of the banks of the noble river which it lines. The banks upon both ſides of the Thames above London Bridge ſhould be faced with ſtone, and a ſpacious ſtreet and range of buildings ſhould grace the piers, in the ſame manner as at Peterſburgh. If individual proprietors would not conſent to execute this plan, our government might purchaſe the property at a fair valuation, and diſpoſe of it again to many enterpriſing gentlemen who would

inſtantly re-purchaſe it. The uncommon as well as the ſuperior elegance and conveniency of the ſituation for the wealthy nobility, gentry and merchants, would abundantly repay the architects and builders. Thus the Thames would be reſtored as to life; and his ſhores inhabited and decorated by thoſe men who derive their happineſs and riches from the commercial intercourſe which his ſtreams facilitate.

The improvements upon the river's banks below London bridge might be conſtructed chiefly for the conveniencies of trade, with as ſmall alterations however as theſe objects will admit of. Such improvements would extend in due courſe of time from the river; and the miſerable ſtreets and lanes, now in the very heart of London and Weſtminſter, gradually be rebuilt upon a magnificent, as well as more convenient conſtruction. Theſe immenſe cities reſemble a pine apple which is rotten at the heart: their centres give diſguſt to more ſenſes than the eye. The ſuburbs ought to be the reſidence of the poor, and particularly for the

the cheapneſs of rents, and other conveniencies which ſuburbs will always beſt afford them. Inſtead therefore of extending, as at preſent, the fineſt ſtreets and buildings upon the dead plain which ſurrounds our metropolis, let houſes of ſimple architecture be erected. The induſtrious and the poor will inſtantly reſort to them, and the proprietors of houſes in the midſt of the city will be obliged to rebuild them in another form; ſome ſtreets for the reception of the higher ranks, and others for wealthy ſhop keepers.

In Peterſburgh the ſhops are collected together in the Aſiatic ſtyle, and ſerve as ſhops and warehouſes only. But this is not a good plan. The grand diſplay of commerce which we view wherever we walk in London, as well as the ſplendid illumination of the ſtreets from the ſhop windows, muſt give at firſt ſight a deciſion in favour of our mode, even before we recollect the other advantages attending it. Our ſhopkeepers, by lodging with their families on the ſpot where their buſineſs is carried on, have their property always under their im-

mediate care, and derive conſiderable aſſiſtance from their wives and children.

A Ruſſian ſhop-keeper, beſides the expence of clerks, muſt leave his ſhop at every meal, and in the evening deſert it altogether. Above every ſhop door in Ruſſia is placed the figure of ſome guardian ſaint. The ſhop-keeper upon leaving his warehouſe after locking the door, and putting a ſeal upon it, to break which laſt is deemed the moſt atrocious crime, croſſes himſelf before the holy painting, thanks it for the quick ſale of his goods upon that day, and intreats it to guard his valuables during his abſence.

I ſhould only wiſh the Aſiatic ſtyle of ſhop-keeping to be followed in the ſale of animal food: the moſt retired ſpots of cities ſhould be fixed upon, though at convenient ſituations for the inhabitants. It reflects no honour upon our feelings, to have the carcaſes of animals that once poſſeſſed life, and inſtinct approaching to reaſon, hung up in every corner to incite, but which ſhould rather pall, our appetites. It

becomes

becomes the government of a country to reform a cuſtom ſo diſgraceful to humanity.

Mr. Howard would have carried his reflections upon this topic farther. He was invited to dine at the houſe of a gentleman in Peterſburgh: he delayed coming until he imagined the dinner would be over and the viands * removed from table; when he ordered a plate of potatoes for his meal.

The Aſiatics conſtruct every building, public and private, in the form of a ſquare: and the Ruſſians, *ab origine* Aſiatics, inherit this taſte. Not only their market places and all buildings for tranſacting buſineſs are of this form, but likewiſe every building for the purpoſes of pleaſure or magnificence. The houſes of the princes and nobles are conſequently more ſuperb, but leſs neat and convenient, than thoſe of modern ſtructure. The whole ſuite of apartments ſerve as entrances to each other. The inhabitant wiſhes you to paſs through them

* Mr. Howard gave them another name.

all, before you arrive at the room where he ſits and entertains company. In paſſing you behold the open ſquare which the palace itſelf incloſes, and the range of windows and apartments upon the oppoſite ſide, which certainly has a grand effect; the architecture and ornaments being all in the moſt finiſhed taſte. This incloſed ſquare is the world of every Aſiatic: whereever he throws his eyes, he beholds his own property and works; the property and works of others are ſhut out: and here he reclines upon a ſopha drinking his coffee, or otherways regaling himſelf amidſt his numerous viſitors and attendants. Yet the Ruſſians in cities, at leaſt in this metropolis, after the manner of the Germans and French, affect to be more public than private in their entertainments and aſſemblies; and the rooms fronting the ſtreets and highways are the moſt occupied by the inhabitants.

As in Aſia too, every perſon has his peculiar province, and this province and profeſſion frequently deſcends to their poſ-

terity,

terity. A ſtranger is apt to commit many blunders in aſking a Ruſſian domeſtic to do ſome work which is not his inheritance.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

Summer Amuſements of the Ruſſian Nobility—Anecdote of a Pariſian Lady—Celebration of the fourth of June in a Ruſſian Wood.—Anecdote of a Britiſh Officer—of the Finland Girls.—Situation of the Slaves.—Contraſt of Character between Aſiatics and Europeans.—Ruſſians converſe with their Horſes, as do all Aſiatics.—Horſe-racing patroniſed by Count Orloff.—The preſent degenerated State of the Tartars.

Ingria, July 1791.

YOU would naturally think that no ſituation could be more retired than the centre of a Ruſſian foreſt—You are miſtaken. Here is a ſmall lake, in which I fiſh, ſurrounded with woods. I never conceived it poſſible to be diſturbed in my retreat by other than Satyrs and Naiads, or to behold any other diſtinguiſhed perſonage than Pan himſelf.

himſelf. I am, however, daily interrupted. Princes and princeſſes, counts and barons, like ſo many river deities and goddeſſes, are frequently wandering about with their fiſhing-rods.

The Princeſs Gallitzin, Count Cobentzel (the imperial ambaſſador), General Markoff (director of the college of foreign affairs), and other ladies and gentlemen, took away the boat in which I navigate this inland ſea. I will make a complaint to Catharine. I can prove my claim to this lake by near two years' poſſeſſion.

The great people in Ruſſia conduct themſelves with leſs ceremony than thoſe of any other nation. This company are regaling themſelves with Engliſh beer, upon the banks of the lake. I have ſeen the firſt ranks ſeated upon the granite benches upon the banks of the Neva, oppoſite to ſome tavern, which ſupplied them with lemonade: and here, which is the public ſtreet, they were as much at home as in their own drawing-rooms.

When I returned to the poſt-houſe, a chaiſe

chaiſe and ſix horſes had juſt arrived; it contained a very young and beautiful lady. The troſky with the Princeſs Galitzin and her company paſſed their carriage. At this inſtant the unknown fair-one drew the curtain: this, no doubt, excited the curioſity of General Markoff, who came into the poſt-houſe, and aſked for a ſight of the lady's paſſport.—He read, and ſmiled.—The charming lady in the chaiſe was a French *fill-de-joie*, who had accompanied a Ruſſian Prince from Paris. He grew tired of her, and ſhe has a conſiderable annuity from him, which, with aids from ſeveral acquaintances of rank, enables her to live in ſtyle.

I had with me at dinner, ſome days ago, half a dozen Britons; and we made the woods, which were cloſe at our windows, re-echo with "God ſave the King." An old maſter of a ſhip of war added *Britannia rules the waves*, and *Hearts of oak*. The Ruſſians looked up to us with admiration, and, no doubt, thought that theſe were the favourite airs upon the Britiſh * *balileka*.

* See vol. I. p. 90.

This

This old tar has retired from the Ruſſian ſervice, becauſe he is diſappointed of promotion. He ſays that the Chevalier de Litter, under whom he was firſt lieutenant, promiſed him a higher rank, and to procure for him a preſent in money. The chagrined veteran vents his curſes upon the whole Ruſſian empire, and drinks ſucceſs to Guſtavus. This ſeaman and I were fiſhing together, at the ſame place, about this time, laſt year; when we heard the firing in the engagement between Admiral Kruſe and the Duke of Sudermania, near Cronſtadt. Lieutenant Smith dropped his fiſhing-rod, and pulling up his breeches, which were generally hanging lower than they ſhould have been, haſtened to the ſea-ſhore, inviting me with many vociferous oaths and exclamations to follow him. The cannon thundered in our ears. Smith, holding up his breeches with one hand, demonſtrated to me with the other the ſeveral manœuvres which the Swedes would make to drive the Ruſſian fleet into Cronſtadt. Every ſhot gave freſh vigour to the

the lieutenant's eloquence: he thought he ſaw the Ruſſian fleet giving way, the ſignal for chaſe at the Swediſh admiral's main top-maſt, and the maſts and yards of the Ruſſian fleet dropping like the leaves in autumn. He does not, however, ſee at a great diſtance, if I can judge from a circumſtance I am going to relate.

Accuſtomed to ſtormy ſcenes, he is rather awkward in country ſports. He acquits himſelf tolerably in fiſhing, having formerly caught mackerel with a line over the ſtern gallery of the Cleopatra or ſome other Britiſh frigate.

The lieutenant trudges through the woods with me with a fowling-piece. The game was ſcarce, ſo I fixed the ſkeleton of a horſe's head among the branches. I hailed Mr. Smith, and deſired him to approach with ſoft ſteps, leſt the bird ſhould give us the ſlip. With all that anxiety which diſtinguiſhes keen ſportſmen, Smith drew near, with his muſket in full cock, and preſented. He took a good aim and fired. He expreſſed much

much ſurpriſe that the bird neither fell nor fled—it muſt be entangled among the branches. He therefore walked with cautious ſteps, to take hold of it, fearing that, being only wounded, it might ſtill get off. I made the beſt of my way home, to eſcape a volley, which I heard reſounding after me through the foreſt.

The Finland girls come every Sunday to the poſt-houſe with their ſtrawberries. They attend church in the morning; the reſt of the day they range the foreſt for the wild fruit it produces. The lieutenant makes love to them. One of the girls is very beautiful—the contents of her baſket are ſooner diſpoſed of and at a higher price than any of the others. I aſked her if ſhe would have me for her huſband.—She ſmiled, and aſked me if I would purchaſe her ſtrawberries. The want of beard is much againſt me in affairs of gallantry: if I kiſs the girls, they turn it into ridicule, and kiſs the back of their hands, which they ſay is as good as the kiſs of an Engliſhman who has no hair upon his lips. In the week-days the fe-

males are employed in all manner of drudgery both at home and in the field: upon holidays the younger endeavour to procure ſome money in the manner I have noticed, as they receive no other wages than clothes and board from their parents, to whom they are in general ſervants. The patriarchal government ſtill exiſts in many parts of Finland and Ruſſia, unleſs where a tyrant maſter interferes and divides, by ſale, the father from his children. Such inſtances of cruelty, however, ſeldom occur. The landholders ſeldom diſpoſe of any others of their ſlaves than the idle and profligate, who are a burden to the eſtate, which muſt not only maintain them, but pay their taxes; and few landholders will purchaſe ſuch ſlaves, who are often ſold to the army, or ſent in place of the more induſtrious.

This flat country abounding in game, and where there are few incloſures to interrupt the huntſman, invites to rural ſports. I expected to hear the hound and horn awake the morning. I have not ſeen more than one pack of dogs belonging to a nobleman,

bleman, and the woods and plains are ranged only by the ſervants of noblemen, or profeſſional poachers. The Ruſſians are not an indolent people; but ſome athletic exerciſes, common in moſt other countries, are not congenial to their humour. The purſuits of war and of money are their moſt favourite exerciſes. Theſe purſuits are common to all countries, and the principal difference betwixt European and Aſiatic nations is this, that the firſt endeavour to procure money by arts of peace, or by private fraud; the latter by open plunder: the firſt by any method, by any crime leſs than murder; the latter prefer aſſaſſination or war, as the ſpeedieſt courſe to wealth and power.—

Trojan and Grecian differ but in name. P. H.

The breed of horſes ſeems to be particularly attended to in Ruſſia; yet horſe-racing is hardly known. I formerly remarked that the ſtreet ſledges in Peterſburgh were ſometimes drawn by horſes of great value. The Tartars are excellent horſemen: the Ruſſians extremely awkward upon horſeback; yet they delight in their horſes, and in ſhewing

their ſpeed by driving in ſledges. The Ruſſian and the Tartar Coſſac make companions of their horſes; they converſe with them, reprimanding or praiſing them as their *conduct* merits. I have been repeatedly and well informed, that perfectly in the ſame manner the natives of India converſe with their elephants. I have heard a Ruſſian reproach his horſe for a lazy ungrateful raſcal, that, notwithſtanding he had been well uſed, and even received that ſame day a double allowance of oats, he hardly moved with the waggon, and trudged along like a man in irons. The Ruſſian, having worked himſelf into a paſſion, ſeized his horſe by the bridle, and continued beating him without mercy as long as his arm could hold the whip. This Ruſſian was driving two ſledges loaded with hay: he informed the other horſe how he had chaſtized his lazy fellow-labourer, as a warning to him to eſcape the like puniſhment, by laying his ſhoulders to the draught. Their horſes really appear to underſtand the oratory of their maſters: a ſingle word or nod is a ſufficient hint to the

the animal. In the ſtreets of Peterſburgh the ſledgemen are fond of being followed by their horſes. When not employed, they will give a ſignal to the horſe to leave his ſtation, and the maſter walks in great ſtate backwards and forwards with his cavalry in the rear. They frequently, too, deſire the horſes to put their fore-feet in the maſter's hands, which is inſtantly obeyed. The horſes themſelves enter into the humour of this amuſement, and ſhake their heads and tails, expreſſively of their ſatisfaction.

Count Orloff is the only nobleman who is diſtinguiſhed by his attention to, and delight in, the ſports of the turf. He has the fineſt collection of horſes, perhaps, in Europe. Muſcow, the family reſidence of this nobleman, not far removed from Perſia and Turkey, uninterrupted by ſeas, affords him an eaſy conveyance for bringing to his menage the horſes of thoſe countries, and likewiſe of Arabian horſes imported into Turkey. To theſe are added Engliſh blood-horſes. One or more of theſe the Count annually imports from Yorkſhire. The

race-ground has been formed near Muſcow at a conſiderable expence. Many of the Tartar princes are reſident in Ruſſia; not only as hoſtages, but as viſitors, and in order to acquire a knowledge of the arts and ſciences.

Why are the Ruſſians, ſo nearly allied to the Tartars in manners, cuſtoms, and language, and both of them ſo fond of their horſes, ſo inferior to the latter in horſemanſhip? The predatory life of the Tartars is not more the cauſe of this ſuperiority to the Ruſſians, than the difference of climate of theſe two nations. Ruſſia, covered with ſnow ſix months of the year, has neceſſitated the natives to drive about in ſledges: and the Aſiatics, and all of Aſiatic origin, are *caſily* neceſſitated to lie rather than to walk or ride. The Ruſſian reclines in his ſledge amidſt ſnow and hail: the Indian in his palanquin under the torrid zone. The Tartar, averſe to trade, is put to more violent exerciſes in ſearch of a ſubſiſtence. Tartary, properly ſo called, is not covered with ſnow for any length of time; and ſledges

are

are as ill calculated for their country, as for their manner of life.

How fallen the Tartars from their former glory! I allude to their former rank in the peaceful arts, not in war. Thoſe plains, the antient ſite of elegance and induſtry, where proud cities raiſed their turrets, and golden harveſts covered the wide expanſe, are now deſert waſtes. A few ſcattered villages and encampments ſerve juſt to mark the reſidence and the exiſtence of ſavages. The Empire of Tartary died of the ſame diſeaſe with Rome; and of ſeveral empires more antient than Rome: a thirſt of conqueſt and an overgrown body. The countries where theſe empires once flouriſhed, as if it were to ſerve for a monument to the diſgrace of mad ambition and war, remain deſerts. What is Italy itſelf, compared with its antient ſtate, but a deſert? Aſſyria and Perſia are one wilderneſs, the abode and retreat of banditti, the outcaſts of men. The majority of mankind, now wiſer, may ſave from deſtruction nations, which never yet were long preſerved by tyrants and their armies.

LETTER XLIII.

Of the Facility of acquiring Languages in Ruſſia.—Of the Ruſſian Bagnios.—Anecdotes of the moſt celebrated Nuns.—Anecdotes of ſome Britiſh Officers.—Anecdote of Paul Jones.—Foundling Hoſpitals.—A new Plan for eſtabliſhing Aſylums for reformed Proſtitutes.

St. Peterſburgh, July 1791.

IF you wiſh to learn half a dozen languages or ſo, this is the beſt ſchool for you to come to. It is not merely the variety of foreigners, ſpeaking an equal variety of tongues, but almoſt every individual ſpeaks three or four different dialects. The very domeſtic ſervants are proficients in languages. The children of the better ranks of Engliſh, Ruſſians, and Germans, converſe at the earlieſt age in theſe ſeveral tongues, and likewiſe in French.

It

It would make Domine Lingo himſelf ſtare to hear theſe little proficients. Unleſs in learning the languages grammatically, the children have no teachers but their parents, the ſervants of the houſe, and the company who frequent it. It is diverting enough to ſee and hear the ſervants or others chiding the children in ſeveral languages; and the little creatures weeping, and replying to one in German, to another in Ruſſian, and to a third in Engliſh.

You can always, however, find out the native country of the majority of the company, by liſtening to the prevailing ſounds. How natural it is to ſpeak the language of our infancy! I have always noticed that in the heat of diſcourſe, if one could not make himſelf underſtood in ſpeaking a foreign language, he inadvertently attempted to explain himſelf in his own tongue, without conſidering whether or no a ſingle word of it was comprehended by the party to whom he addreſſed himſelf: and wherever a company all of one nation are aſſembled in a ſtrange land, though they may, from daily habit, converſe with the natives

at

at times in the language of the country they are in, yet the converſation ends in their native notes; and particularly if the bottle circulates freely, the ſongs and oaths are all of them plain German, or plain Engliſh, as the aſſemblage may be of the one or the other nation.

The grand qualification required here in ordinary ſervants, is, to ſpeak ſeveral tongues: one can hardly find employment as a porter without ſuch knowledge. Nay, a thorough knowledge in the languages is abſolutely neceſſary, if you would viſit the bagnios. You do not know whether the lady of the houſe is a Ruſſian, a Swede, a German, a Dane, an Italian, a Frenchwoman, a Spaniard, a Finlander or a Tartar.

The Grand Signor has a ſelect collection of nymphs from Circaſſia and Georgia at a vaſt expence; but here every common ſoldier or ſeaman, any merchant's clerk, may have a choice from every quarter of the globe. Every thing here is upon the ſame ſcale with the empire.—By variety here we do not underſtand ſimply a variety

riety of women, but a variety of nations. The houſes of *accommodation* are upon the ſame great plan. There are ſeveral houſes in Peterſburgh containing forty and fifty good-natured ladies under each roof. I do not know if it is meant as a compliment to the amorous complexion of the Engliſh, who every foreigner will tell you loves his bottle and his girl, that the moſt extenſive and famous bagnio in Peterſburgh is the *Ville de Londres.*

You will laugh at me for writing the hiſtory of bagnios—Have patience—A traveller muſt overlook nothing. He enters into a compact with himſelf to pick up every thing. He is a rag-gatherer, but for the purpoſe of making a noble manufacture of them.

As the Ville de Londres is the moſt extenſive, the houſe of a Jeweſs contains the moſt ſelect, collection of beauty. Yet, true to her faith, ſhe will not herſelf approach a Chriſtian: ſhe only condeſcends to take his money. Attentive to buſineſs, and poſſeſſing the moſt liberal ideas of trade, ſhe

ſhe carries it on ſyſtematically. During the war, many brave cuſtomers being abſent and money ſcarce, ſhe was rather ſlack during the ſummer months, and had only a few heroes of the counter to pay her an evening viſit: but no ſooner did the fleets return to port, and the army to winter quarters, than this enterpriſing dealer detached a body of petticoat cavalry from the main body to Cronſtadt, Revel, and Wyburg, to welcome the conquering warriors home.

When the carnivals are held upon the frozen river in February, or in the ſtreets in April, the moſt diſtinguiſhed puppet-ſhow is exhibited in the wooden theatre of the Jeweſs. Here, in addition to the nymphs behind the ſcenes, rope-dancers and tumblers afford moſt delectable fun. To invite the crowd, the Jeweſs, with her birds of Paradiſe by her ſide, harangues from an exalted ſituation, to which a ladder enables her to mount, the gaping mobility. She demonſtrates clearly that her exhibitions are worth their money, and

makes ſome comments upon miſers. To the aid of oratory ſhe calls in muſic. She plays a good hand at the cymbals: ſeveral of the ladies in waiting are paſſable upon a drum and a fiddle. I have even witneſſed no deſpicable performance upon the trumpet by a fair trumpeter.

There are very few fair nymphs who keep their houſe and carriage. One or two French ladies are in the firſt ſtyle here. Of theſe, madam Elliot ſays ſhe is of Engliſh parents, and ſhe ſpeaks fluently the Engliſh tongue.

I need hardly mention that a maſquerade is a place of intrigue; but in this country it is a place of the loweſt intrigue. Any one may obtain admittance for half a crown, and of conſequence the company conſiſts of the loweſt as well as the higheſt ranks. The count under maſque dances with his chamber-maid and footman. The ſtricteſt decorum is obſerved, and indeed enforced by the preſence of police officers, who attend not only here, where they are certainly neceſſary, but upon all public occaſions,

caſions, even where the whole of the company are known, and of the moſt reſpectable or exalted ranks. If a ball is given at a tavern or public room, whether maſqued or no, notice muſt be given to the police-maſter of the quarter of the city where the entertainment is to be given, and he diſpatches at the uſual hour a lieutenant and guard. The cuſtom of the Ruſſians in retaining their carriages and ſervants whereever they go, or however long they ſtay, renders this guard very proper and uſeful.

In the Ruſſian maſquerades, conſiſting of ſuch a mixture as would undoubtedly be attended with a boxing match every moment, were ſuch an aſſemblage to conſiſt of Engliſhmen, there is not even an attempt at diſturbance; not merely from awe of the guard, but from natural diſpoſition: and ſhould any perſon offer the leaſt inſult, however great the offender or however humble the offended, the aggreſſed would find a friend by applying to any perſon of rank in the company.

At one of theſe maſquerades, I obſerved a girl

a girl of the town forwardly intruding herſelf upon ſeveral gentlemen. Fired with her impertinence, one of them pulled off her maſque. The girl directly went to a Ruſſian nobleman who was ſeated at the other corner of the room with ſome acquaintance: ſhe complained of the inſult, and this gentleman, though he ſaw plainly the rank and profeſſion of the petitioner, left his company and went with the diſtreſſed damſel, in ſearch of the diſcourteous knight who had offended her. The offender was a nobleman. This did not prevent an explanation being demanded, and, after mutual laughter at the adventure, the girl was deſired to behave herſelf better in future. The diſappointed nymph did not leave them without beſtowing ſome ſharp language upon both parties. The police officer never takes notice of ſuch occurrences unleſs a complaint be made to him.

Peterſburgh, a new metropolis, is rapidly increaſing in every convenience for the accommodation of vice. Dancing aſſemblies, for the purpoſe of making love bargains, are

are as common here as in London. An Engliſh commander of a Ruſſian ſhip of the line told me, that he was placed rather in an awkward predicament in a little adventure with ſome acquaintance at a dancing club. They concluded a treaty with ſome fair partners, and at the concluſion of the ball drove away in ſledges to a bagnio. The Ruſſian bagnios are not conſtructed, as ours are, by the genius of ſuſpicion and privacy. A Ruſſian bagnio contains in every room, as many beds as it can poſſibly find ſpace for. But this is not peculiar to the bagnios, but common to all the lower order of public houſes in Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, as well as Ruſſia; and the reaſon for this, I apprehend, is, that it requires a leſs number of ſtoves.

The captain with his brother officers could have put up with the bagnio as it was: but unfortunately a freſh company of ſtrangers arrived from ſome other dancing aſſembly, and wanted exactly the ſame accommodation. The landlord, as uſual, without ceremony let the remainder of the beds

beds to the new comers. The captain was chagrined, though he knew the cuſtoms of the country; yet making a virtue of neceſſity, they joined company at ſupper, ſaluted each other's girls, and all went peaceably, in due time, to their chamber.

It is eſteemed a piece of magnificence in Scandinavia when a bed has got curtains. This magnificence is not known in the public houſes.

His Excellency Admiral Paul Jones, whoſe name and Lord Selkirk's ſilver plate will always be remembered together, lodged, at his arrival from the Black Sea, at the Ville de Londres. The admiral being tired of the accommodations which his hotel provided, from the attic ſtories was ſmitten one morning with the beauty of the girl who ſold him milk for his tea. The girl did not exceed ten years of age, and, not being yet initiated in the paths of vice, made every reſiſtance, and forced his Excellency by her ſhrieks to permit her to go away. Her mother made a complaint to the officer of police; and the Admiral, not-

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withſtanding his rank, was happy, by the utmoſt intereſt, to get this affair of gallantry ſettled by a preſent of money.

It is reported, that a great perſonage, upon hearing this circumſtance, expreſſed her ſurpriſe that the warrior could not be ſatisfied with the various eaſy accommodation which her metropolis afforded him.

Houſes of bad fame are not publicly allowed here; but, as in other countries, winked at. The police, as far as they can, diſcourage them, ſince they tend to hurt population in an empire where the inhabitants are ſo thinly ſpread. The Empreſs, as if to make up for her loſs of ſubjects, occaſioned by the ſtews, which never produce any thing but diſeaſe, has erected foundling hoſpitals in moſt of the large cities. Here every father, who cannot afford to marry, may place his children, without any queſtions being aſked. The parents have only to put the child into a box in the wall, and to ring a bell to give notice to nurſery women, who directly come to take out the infant.

Another eſtabliſhment is wanted here as well

well as in all countries: I mean hoſpitals for the reception of ſuch females as wiſh to return to the paths of virtue. I know there are ſome hoſpitals of this nature in England; but they do little ſervice, owing to the inconſiderate plan of their eſtabliſhment.

Women who are led aſtray are of all ranks: ſome poſſeſs the nobleſt qualities of the mind, and are accompliſhed in every reſpect: it is not proper that ſuch women, willing to give over their infamous profeſſion, ſhould be lodged in a common hoſpital, and mixed with the vulgar proſtitutes. The virtuous in high life do not love the ſociety of even the virtuous among the vulgar; far leſs will unfortunate females the ſociety of each other, at a time too when they are inclined to forget each other, and their odious manner of life. Allow that each has a ſeparate apartment, and is waited upon by a ſeparate ſervant: while all deſcriptions are under the ſame roof, ſociety with each other cannot be avoided without complaints from the vulgar, who will

draw no compariſon to their own diſadvantage. Their ſociety could not much improve each other, and to be entirely alone, is to increaſe melancholy, not virtue, in thoſe who have been accuſtomed to the oppoſite extreme of ſituation. A number of ſmall houſes ſhould be purchaſed for this uſe, either in the midſt of cities or in retired places, as may be moſt agreeable to different diſpoſitions. Theſe houſes ſhould not be known by any inſcription or mark. They ſhould aſſume the appearance of lodging-houſes: a decent matron with her huſband ſhould be appointed to ſuperintend not only houſehold affairs, but capable of giving moral inſtruction to the lower order of reclaimed proſtitutes, and of teaching reading and writing. Or penitents, of the better ranks and characters, might be placed as boarders or penſioners in poor, but creditable, private families. The governors and inſpectors ſhould examine the minds of the females applying for ſuch aſylums, and diſtribute them according to their merits, or permit them to make their

own choice, and to change their lodging whenever they inclined.

Such a liberal plan as this would be attended with the moſt ſalutary effects. A female having committed one fault would directly have a refuge againſt the reproach of her relations and acquaintance, and ſoon find conſolation in induſtry, and in ſociety that did not ſcorn her. The falſe and cruel prejudice of relations might be overcome upon certificates being ſent of the penitent behaviour and irreproachable conduct of the unfortunate females; and they might again be reſtored to their families, or to the world, in various ſtations, for which their fall and repentance might render them more worthy, than the arrogant virtuous, who have nothing but chaſtity, or perhaps a command of their paſſions, or only the fortunate want of opportunity and ſolicitation, to boaſt of.

LETTER XLIV.

Anecdote of Mr. Wilkes's late Houſe-keeper, now at Peterſburgh.—Anecdote of an Engliſh Dog.—Ruſſians become jealous of Foreigners, and the Cauſe of this.—Anecdote of an Engliſh Gentleman, a Ruſſian Prince, and of Count ——, Governor of Moſcow.

St. Peterſburgh, July 1791.

THERE is but one Engliſh coffee-houſe in Peterſburgh: you will know it by the inſcription over the door "*Anglis Caffé Hous.*" It is kept by a late female domeſtic of the celebrated Mr. John Wilkes; a Frenchwoman by birth. A new cuſtomer is always entertained, along with his *caffé*, with anecdotes of her miſtreſs, Miſs Wilkes, whom ſhe praiſes highly as the very mirror of virtue and all good qualities.

This

This lady, in addition to tea and coffee, formerly the only thing to be had in her rooms, has got a ſtock of rum to make Engliſh punch. She told me, "that ſhe had much difficulty in procuring a licence: that the officers of the cuſtoms would do nothing without extravagant fees: but, continued ſhe, I gave them no reſt, I went every day, and, as they knew me to be an Engliſh woman, I ventured to ſpeak freely to them—I told them that they were a pack of raſcals.—They were frightened, and gave me my licence." Her method of doing buſineſs ſhe informed me was this: "If any "gentleman called for a diſh of coffee or "a glaſs of punch, and *forgot* to pay for it, "ſhe never had any thing in her houſe "when they called again, until they paid "her the old debt."

The moſt prudent people will meet with misfortunes. She had lately a misfortune in a love affair; and, as every perſon becomes her confident immediately on his arrival, ſhe ſtated the matter to me thus: "You have "ſeen that French gentleman by the ſide

" of my fire frequently—he is a moſt un-
" grateful fellow. He had from me his
" lodgings and board for nothing, *and he*
" *was unto me as a huſband.* The fellow,"
continued this lady, " at laſt began to give
" himſelf the airs of a huſband, and to uſe
" the freedom of ſcolding and even of beat-
" ing me: but I have a good ſpirit, and I
" this morning turned the ungrateful dog
" down ſtairs." I commended her much for this ſenſible inſtance of executive power, and adviſed her to be more cautious of her next choice; but ſhe is reſolved, no doubt while the marks of the blows remain, to have no more connection with tyrant man.

The Engliſh, and every thing from England, were, until of late, all in all with the Ruſſians. Even a dog from England would have met with all poſſible patronage. In the gardens of the palace of Zarſko Zelo I obſerved a pillar which I ſuppoſed erected to the memory of ſome worthy. Upon reading the inſcription, I found it contained an epitaph upon an Engliſh dog! This

honeſt

honeſt maſtiff, whoſe courage and fidelity had procured him the favour of the Empreſs Catharine II, had been brought to Ruſſia by ſome ſhip-maſter. The dog by the direction of ſome good ſtar found his way to the court; and, no doubt invited by the ſteams from the Imperial kitchen, reſolved to lodge there in preference to the dirty crib upon a veſſel's deck, and where he could obtain nothing but the tattered relics of the ſeamen's dinner for his ſubſiſtence.

This judicious preference marked him born for a courtier; but his other qualities were much ſuperior to the ordinary virtues found in levees. He remained at the Court of Ruſſia many years; and, if he was known to flatter, by fawning upon his Imperial miſtreſs, at leaſt he was never known to betray. His epitaph is in ſubſtance: "That virtue in animals of whatever kind merits reward: That the animal here interred poſſeſſed the nobleſt virtues, courage, fidelity, and ambition: That, unlike the moſt part of his countrymen in Ruſſia, who arrived in ſearch of vulgar commerce, this dog had contempt-

contemptuouſly paſſed their houſes, and directly come to court, where he had been treated generouſly, and merited this treatment by long and faithful ſervices."

The Ruſſian government, nobility, and gentry formerly paid every attention to ſtrangers viſiting the country. The ill uſage they experienced in return from ſeveral ill-natured philoſophers in their books of travels, make them now behold travellers as ſpies, come to pick up what intelligence they can, with a view to revile them. I have been told very plainly by ſome gentlemen to whom I applied for information, that they did not chooſe to run the riſk of having their names given as authority, perhaps for more than they had mentioned. I was under the neceſſity of having recourſe to every ſecret expedient, to procure what I might have obtained in open company, had no illiberal philoſopher arrived before me.

The utmoſt civility is yet obſerved to ſtrangers by the higher ranks: but we have loſt their confidence. In Peterſburgh, ſtrangers

gers are as much at home as the Ruſſians themſelves: every perſon here is ſurrounded with his countrymen. It is in the inland cities, where attentions of the natives to ſtrangers are moſt requiſite, that they are moſt paid. Yet, as will happen in other nations, there are, at time, inſtances of incivility from Ruſſians to ſtrangers, and from ſtrangers to Ruſſians.

A young Iriſh gentleman was lately at Muſcow. One night he was preſent at a public maſquerade. In walking through the rooms he inadvertently, in the crowd, preſſed againſt a Ruſſian lady of high quality. The princeſs complained of the rudeneſs; and the gentleman, the moment he underſtood what had happened, went to the lady, and made the moſt ample apology. The princeſs expreſſed herſelf ſatisfied, and the gentleman naturally ſuppoſed this affair ſettled.

A Ruſſian officer, probably ſome dependent of the prince, the huſband of the lady, anxious to ſhew his attachment to the family, baſely encouraged others of the compa-

ny,

ny, no doubt by miſrepreſenting the matter, to inſult this ſtranger, by crowding about him and ſhewing different ſigns of diſapprobation. The Engliſhman who kept the houſe, adviſed the gentleman to leave the rooms, as it was idle to contend with hundreds—He did ſo, but was followed unperceived by the Ruſſian officer, who in one of the entries leading out from the rooms came behind the Iriſh gentleman, and pulled him down, aſſaulting him in the groſſeſt manner. In this conduct, I am ſorry to add, the officer was not only abetted but aſſiſted by the prince his patron. Every country has ſome nobility to diſgrace it.

The landlord with difficulty reſcued the ſtranger—the prince and officer ran away. The gentleman, not being able to find the delinquents, applied to the governor of Muſcow for redreſs, who readily promiſed that exemplary puniſhment ſhould be inflicted, and demanded to know what ſort of ſatisfaction the gentleman expected. The ſtranger replied, that although the prince and his aſſociate had behaved like

ſcoun-

ſcoundrels, he would be ſatisfied with the prince's accepting a challenge to fight him in a duel. The governor ſaid, that ſuch ſatisfaction was not permitted by the laws of Ruſſia, but that he would cheerfully grant any ſatisfaction which theſe did permit.

The ſtranger thanked the governor for his politeneſs, and agreed to accept of an apology, which he wrote down, to be delivered by the prince and the officer in preſence of the company aſſembled at the next maſquerade. The maſquerade was in conſequence of this expected exhibition much crowded. The governor himſelf attended, and the prince and officer, having mounted to the orcheſtra, pronounced from it, in view of all the aſſembly, the apology dictated to them.

The governor added: "Thus will I puniſh "any one who treats ill any ſtranger. Our "city and country are not ſo full of foreign-"ers, that we need drive them from us with "rudeneſs and inhoſpitality: on the con-"trary, let us invite ſociety ſo beneficial to

"us,

" us, with kindneſs and reſpect. I am " aſhamed for my country, that perſons of " ſuch exalted rank ſhould not ſhew a bet- " ter example to their inferiors: but while " I have authority, thoſe who will not vo- " luntarily ſhew a good example ſhall be " held up an example at leaſt of the juſtice " of our laws."

Count ———, the governor, deſerves not merely the thanks of his country, but the eſteem of mankind, for ſuch a noble behaviour.

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LETTER XLV.

Mr. Coxe's Account of the Finlanders differs from the Accounts given in these Volumes, and the Reasons of this.—Customs and Manners of the Finlanders.—Manufactures.—Finland Marriage.—Love Anecdote.—Reflection upon Marriage-Laws.—Finland Baths.—Their Women appear naked in public.—Lady Mary Montague's Ideas refuted.—Finland Diversions resembling those in Scotland.—Droll Anecdote of the Finland and Livonian Languages.

Ingria, July 1791.

MR. Coxe has given a very different character of the Finlanders from what I conceive to be truth from a long residence among them. "The peasants of Finland," says this gentleman, "differ widely from "the Russian peasants in their look and dress.

"They

" they have for the moſt part fair complex-
" ions, and many of them red hair. They
" ſhave their beards, wear their hair parted
" at the top, and hanging to a conſider-
" able length over their ſhoulders." He thinks them more civilized than the Ruſſians, and more neat and cleanly in their houſes and accommodations; and takes notice of their differing in their religion from the Ruſſians, and having, by ſtipulation between Sweden and Ruſſia, many privileges. " How
" far theſe circumſtances," continues he,
" may render them more enlightened than
" the Ruſſians, is a curious queſtion which
" cannot be anſwered by us, who continued
" in the country ſo ſhort a time."

The Fins under the Swediſh government and the Ruſſian Fins upon the frontiers of Sweden are indeed more wealthy and cleanly than the reſt of their countrymen, and only wear the beard in old age. The numerous ſea-ports and commercial towns upon the Swediſh ſide of the gulph of Finland and that part of Ruſſian Finland adjoining, have long excited in the neighbouring Finlanders

landers a ſpirit of trade, which, notwithſtanding that the lands are not near ſo fertile as the oppoſite provinces of Ingria and Eſthonia, has made the people richer, and of conſequence more cleanly. The Finlanders of Ingria and Eſthonia have the ſame privileges and religion with thoſe of the province of Wyburg, but they have not the ſame opportunities of trading, nor the ſame materials. I ſhall ſpeak of the commerce of Finland in another place. The poverty of the Ingrians makes them more ſervile in their demeanor, as well as more filthy in their habits. The trading claſs of the Fins, who are ingenious enough in the manufacture of various wooden utenſils, afford a proof of the improvement which might be expected from them in a more happy ſituation; where the ſoil and climate, or where commercial intercourſe, invited and encouraged their exertion.

The Finlanders now under the Ruſſian government are, by treaty with their former maſters, exempted from providing recruits for the army and navy. This clauſe had, no doubt, been inſiſted upon by Sweden, in

order to prevent the Finlanders from ſerving againſt the Swedes. But, as the cauſe of every war between Ruſſia and Sweden will be attributed by the one party to the other, and as a breach of faith complained of, muſt always give the Ruſſians a pretext to diſpenſe with this treaty, in the preſent war the Finlanders have been draughted for the armies and navies in common with the other ſubjects of the empire. This people are naturally timid, and cannot be of much ſervice in war. They are unfortunately placed between two fires, two warrior nations; and for this and other ſubſtantial reaſons I wiſh the whole nation of Finlanders removed to the Ukraine.

This people live together in villages. Each houſe, of one ſtory, is divided into two apartments. The firſt is the lumber-room and cellar; the inner room is the family-room, ſerving both for bed-room and dining-room to all the houſehold. A bench covered with their ordinary clothes is the bed upon which ſeveral of the family lie naked. It would be diſagreeable to lie with a

ſhirt,

ſhirt, as the room is ſo warm and the body in a perpetual perſpiration. The ſame benches in the day-time ſerve for chairs and tables. The looms occupy nearly the remainder of the floor; ſo that it is with ſome difficulty any perſon can turn himſelf in their houſes. To each houſe is annexed a back yard containing ſtables for the cattle, and other conveniencies.

I pay frequent viſits to theſe humble dwellings, and converſe with the aged Finlander and his family. In my late excurſions I found the daughter buſily employed in weaving upon the loom her wedding-gown. I aſked her when ſhe was to be married. She had fixed upon her guardian ſaint's holiday for entering into the temple of Hymen. She was much above the tricks practiſed by Ulyſſes's queen, nor did the night unravel what the day began. She plied her fingers nimbly: the ſaint's day was at hand; and ſhe was afraid, that, like the figure of time, if he was allowed to paſs, ſhe might never lay hold of him again. She was a beauty—a ruſtic ſwain was to enjoy all

her charms. Yet how happy her fate! compared with that of Feodorovna, and preferable to that of a ſiſter villager who lately ran away with a Livonian gentleman, an officer in the Ruſſian ſervice, who "having "plucked this fair roſe will ſoon throw it "like a loathſome weed away!" She was tall and elegant in her perſon, of a beautiful countenance, *lighted up with blue eyes.* Her flaxen hair fell in ringlets upon her lovely neck and boſom, and twiſting round them. Innocence awaked her in the morning, and lulled her to ſleep at night. At laſt a cruel ſpoiler came; he promiſed the young girl ſweetmeats and a ſilken dreſs. She followed him to the camp. The diſtracted father haſtened to recover her. The girl was a ſlave to the proprietor of the eſtate, and could not be claimed by a father. The tears of the parent prevailed with his lord to endeavour to obtain the daughter and ſlave. The officer was arreſted, and put in priſon at Wyburg: yet money has again procured him his liberty and his miſtreſs, whom, no doubt, he has purchaſed.

It is exceedingly remarkable to find the youth of this nation ſo fair, yet the old people ſo black. This muſt be in a great meaſure attributed to the uſe of the hot baths. The Finlanders generally go to the baths twice a week. The bath is a ſmall wooden building, within which is a ſort of oven filled with round ſtones. Around theſe the fire is kindled, until they have become red-hot; when water is thrown upon them, and the vapour ariſing from thence involves the bathers, who are ſeated upon benches in the ſtate of nature, and occaſions a greater or leſs degree of perſpiration in the patients, according to the quantity of water thrown upon the ſtones. I cannot ſay that I ever ſaw the Finlanders, men and women, bathing promiſcuouſly; but I have ſeen, as often as I paſſed the baths, which are ſituated near ſome well, the women coming out naked from the ſtoves to bring water, even when they are expoſed to be viewed by every paſſenger upon a public road. Their tawny colour, the looſe texture of their bodies, and their ugly viſages, rendered the ſight diſguſting.

I cannot agree with Lady Mary Montague, "that, were it the fashion for the women to "go naked, the face would be the least no-"ticed." Even the most lovely women would lose in our sight by appearing too much in it. The face would still be most admired. It is the throne of the soul; and, however elegant and handsome the shape and air of the other parts of the body, nothing but the additional allurements and grace of the eyes and smiles, the varied enchantments of a lovely countenance, could fix attention, and command constancy and respect. The young girls, upon holidays, are frequently seen dancing in the same manner with those of the same age in Scotland. As many as happen to be together, take each other by the hand, forming a half circle; the girl at one end passing beneath the arm of the girl at the other, leading all the girls with her, and again returning. All of them thus pass beneath the arms of the other girls, alternately singing and skipping as they perform this figure. It would appear to be a sacred dance. The girl who leads repeats

at each turning ſome words with much ſolemnity: perhaps it is a ſort of prayer, calculated to aſk charity or preſents from the ſpectators. Laſt Sunday, while I was riding upon the ſea-ſhore below Oranienbaum, and oppoſite to the palace of Count Golofkin, where Mr. Whitworth, our ambaſſador, now reſides, about one dozen Finland nymphs were performing the dance before his Excellency's gate. The Scotch highlanders have cuſtoms ſimilar to theſe. In travelling, which they generally do in bands of ten to one hundred people in ſearch of harveſt work in the more ſouthern provinces, they commonly dance upon the public ſtreet of every town they paſs through, to the muſic of the bag-pipe; and they do this with a view of procuring charity from the inhabitants. I have ſeen the Finland women dancing upon the ſtreets of Peterſburgh, ſurrounded by thoſe of their party who did not join the dance, and by others, ſometimes to the muſic of the bag-pipe, but more commonly to their own ſongs. It did not ſeem, however, that they danced to pro-

cure charity, but for amuſement. It is very ſeldom indeed that one is aſked for charity in this country. A Ruſſian lets no opportunity of making mirth eſcape him. A Ruſſian peaſant, carrying a young pig upon his back, came into the ring. The ſound of the bag-pipe and the Finland ſongs did not pleaſe him, or perhaps he imagined that the notes of the pig would anſwer as a firſt fiddle to the concert: he ſhook the ſack in which the animal was confined, and, pinching his ears at the ſame time, added a very new and uncommon melody in vocal performance.

I have not noticed many diverſions peculiar to the Finlanders: they are, in regard to manners and cuſtoms, nearly the ſame people with the Ruſſians. I have ſeen the peaſants in the villages playing at a ſort of *nine pins*; a game common in all the eaſtern coaſt of Britain. Several pieces of ſmall round-ſhaped wood are put, one above the other, upon the ground; two peaſants ſtand fronting each other, at a certain diſtance from this mark, at which, alternately, they throw a ſtick, endeavouring to beat theſe

pieces

pieces down, and to drive them beyond a croſs line drawn upon the ground upon the oppoſite ſide of the mark to him who throws. He who ſucceeds in driving the greateſt number of pieces beyond the croſs-line gains whatever is depending upon this trial of ſkill.—The prize is generally brandy.

Another of the Finland games nearly reſembles one in Scotland. An iron ring of a ſmall diameter is laid flat upon the ground: a peaſant ſtanding over it endeavours to caſt a ſharp-pointed iron bolt ſo as to fix it upon this point within the ring. The Scots place the iron ring upon its edge, and drive with clubs or throw balls through it.

The language of the Finlanders has in it many words common to the Scots and Germans. For inſtance, kirk, a church, in all the three tongues has the ſame ſignification; rig, a ridge; kirn a churn, &c.

The Ruſſian language, though widely different from all European dialects, except the Poliſh, which is of the ſame ſtock, has ſeveral words ſimilar to the German, Engliſh and Scotch languages, as *ſiſtera*, ſiſter, &c.

&c. A number of words bearing a ſimilarity to the Latin are likewiſe to be met with in the Ruſſian tongue, as *dom*, a houſe; *more*, the ſea, &c. &c. But inſtead of entering into learned reſearches into the lineal deſcent of languages, and their collateral alliance and connection from the building of Babel, I will give you an anecdote of a chaſte Finland lady. It is curious to obſerve, that, as we find the languages of the moſt diſtant nations having words ſimilar and of the ſame meaning, we ſhall find too in the adjoining provinces words exactly ſimilar bearing a very oppoſite meaning. The word in the Livonian language for money, in the Finland language is a moſt indecent expreſſion. A Livonian gentleman having a debt due to him by a Finlander, called at his houſe when the landlord happened to be from home. This gentleman aſked the landlady for the debt—She bluſhed, and ſtormed at the open inſult—The *laſt favour* was demanded of her, in the preſence of her family!

LETTER XLVI.

The intereſting Hiſtory of Maria Feodorovna, a young Ruſſian Counteſs.

Ingria, July 1791.

VIRGIN innocence is an inchanted tower: its ſtrength conſiſts more in that awful reſpect which the ſight of it creates in the breaſts of virtuous men, than in its innate fortitude. Thoſe breaſts which poſſeſs no reſpect for virtue, thoſe men who inherit no regard for honour, are the daring aſſailants. The charms they employ to break the enchantments, are flattery, falſehood, proteſtations to the Deity to witneſs *their love!* The ſpell ſucceeds: the tower, with all its gilded turrets, ſhakes, and tumbles in ruins!

Even men inclined to virtue are tempted to purſue the more ſucceſsful, though leſs honourable, path. By ſeeing daily, the vicious and impudent alone revelling in the arms

arms of beauty and betrayed innocence, they gradually loſe reſpect for that innocence and beauty, which, too often, when ſolicited with unremitting diligence, or even when rudely aſſaulted, gives itſelf up to proſtitution. The moſt virtuous daughter under the care of the tendereſt and wiſeſt parent is yet liable to fall a ſacrifice to every villain of genteel appearance and addreſs. Why do not our laws empower the father, the mother, or the brother, to plant a dagger in the ſoul of the deſtroyer of the peace of their family? But, indeed, unleſs the preſent conduct of parents and their relatives is altered, and until they receive the victim under their protection, and forget the fault, they have no title to judge or puniſh; being themſelves deſtitute of feeling and mercy. Such protection and forgiveneſs would not encourage vice. To be for ever debarred from the thought of marriage with men of equal rank would be a ſufficient puniſhment: and the law ſhould expreſsly prohibit marriage with the raviſher, that virtuous women may be enabled at once to

know

know the real intentions of their ſuitors, the moment the leaſt indecent word or action is practiſed by them. Until ſuch laws are made; until parents and relations, and ſociety agree to protect the unfortunate daughter, and to forget the firſt fault and commiſſion of vice, our laws, our relations, and ſociety only bear a name of which they are unworthy.

Let me behold the conſequences of this criminal conduct. A lovely daughter is brought up under the care of, what is commonly called, the fondeſt parents. She is deluded under the promiſe of marriage, or, allow that the deluſion ſucceeded without ſuch promiſe: the fond parents tear their hair and weep bitterly; but they order their daughter to be driven from the houſe. They weep for the diſhonour that has happened to their name; and to cure this diſhonour they ſpread the infamy; they drive out their deſcendent to repeat the crime; and their name becomes known in every bagnio. There are only two ways to ſave the honour of the family thus ſituated; *to continue*

the

the parents of their child, or *to put her to immediate death.* Death would be mercy in compariſon to the diſgraceful proſtitution ſhe muſt now ſuffer. In her firſt outſet ſhe is careſſed by all thoſe lovers who were acquainted with her and her family. Neceſſity, ſometimes revenge for the baſer treatment of thoſe who gave her exiſtence, blunts the agony ariſing from this ſad change! The companions of her father and brothers are familiar with the daughter and ſiſter. She is deſerted, at laſt, by all her acquaintance, for ſome other lady who has more lately been turned out of her father's houſe: ſhe enters the metropolis, and diſpoſes of her favours to every cuſtomer. Shame is now fled; and if ſhe boaſts of her family to raiſe her price, one ſpecies of miſery ſucceeds to another, and the natural conſequences of want and diſeaſe are often anticipated by a voluntary death.

The hiſtory of the Ruſſian lady to whom I have alluded in my laſt letter, is not ſo well known as it ought to be. It contains an awfully intereſting leſſon to parents,

and

and diſplays the fatal effects of a rigorous treatment of their offspring. It was the apprehenſion of a rigorous treatment from a parent of a violent temper that occaſioned the miſeries of Maria Feodorovna. She was a lady of diſtinguiſhed rank and fortune, the only daughter of a nobleman.

During the early period of her life, her education was anxiouſly attended to by the beſt of mothers, whoſe ſoul bore upon it the impreſſion of every noble feeling and virtue. The mother, while ſhe held her favourite daughter before the glaſs, ſaw an exact copy of herſelf in form of body; and the never-ceaſing ſmile upon the cheeks and lips of Maria ſeemed to beſpeak an equally beautiful copy of her mind. This mother died: and the youthful Ruſſian counteſs, from the love and care of her mother, from the polite and elegant round of a court, and from the ſociety of her dear Markoff, who was enraptured with this amiable female, was hurried by the haughty baron to a diſtant eſtate amidſt the wilds of Ruſſia.

Here, ſurrounded with deſerts, nor viewing

ing one object that could bring ſome happy compariſon in thought between them and paſt ſcenes, the lovely Maria exhauſted her boſom in ſobs, and watered her pillow with tears.

The ſociety of count Markoff could have lighted up this deſert, and diſpelled thoſe tears. Diſappointed ambition had occaſioned a miſunderſtanding between the two families, and the name of Markoff was forbid even to be mentioned in the houſe of the baron. His fondneſs for his lovely daughter could not overcome his abhorrence of his ſucceſsful rival, the father of young Markoff; nor permit him to entertain the moſt diſtant idea of that connection which he knew was the ardent wiſh of the youthful pair. His brows darkened with rage, when he ſaw one of his blood who wiſhed not deſtruction to the houſe of Markoff.

Maria was kept in perpetual agony by this unfortunate diſpoſition in her parent, yet forced to affect an indifference to all ſhe loved, while ſhe daily drooped and pined in ſilent melancholy.

melancholy. But no affectation could bring back the rosy health which had lately painted her cheeks; and her languid smiles and action were diseased copies of that lively manner which had distinguished her in happier days. That innocent mirth, unmixed with care, born in the lap of childhood, and expiring with it, was never again to return. Maria was not even destined to enjoy that happiness to which her virtue entitled her. In vain had a mother inspired her with every noble and virtuous sentiment; in vain had nature endowed her with a person the model of beauty, and with an exalted soul; in vain had fortune lavished riches, extensive domains, and thousands of slaves ready to kneel at her feet whenever she appeared.—The meanest of these slaves was to possess Maria.

Count Markoff, disregarding every dictate but that of love, and the dangers which Maria had represented to him as the certain consequence of any attempt to visit her, left his residence near Muscow, and journeyed towards that spot, which was to give

him an interview with his lovely angel. Diſguiſed in the habit of a peaſant, he arrived within ſight of the baron's palace, and ſaw the roof which contained within it all his heart panted for! The breaſt of Markoff until this inſtant felt not the idea of diſappointment: a ſoldier, he had been accuſtomed to cut his way through every difficult paſs with his ſword. The parent of Maria guarded the avenue he was now approaching.

With money he purchaſed the ſervices of ſome perſons who frequented the baron's houſe. He got, by their means, a letter conveyed to Maria. Upon reading this epiſtle, love overcame in her too every dictate of prudence; ſhe loſt recollection of her father's being at that inſtant in the houſe; and, hurrying on her cloak, ſhe ran down ſtairs, and into the fields, then covered with ſnow. Her recollection returned—her heart failed within her—her limbs refuſed to do their office—ſhe ſtood trembling before the wintry ſtorm! She called to her aſſiſtance a ſlave; and pretending ſome other cauſe for her

her illneſs, was aſſiſted to reach her chamber without the knowledge of the awful parent who had occaſioned her diſtreſs.

Maria, overcome with grief, and now giving up every thought of viewing her beloved Markoff, ſunk upon her bed in fits of deſpair and madneſs. Reaſon again reſumed her ſeat: a letter was diſpatched to Markoff at a neighbouring village, deſiring him, as he valued his own and her life, to leave the place, and return to Moſcow, where there might be ſtill a poſſibility of their meeting. Having ſigned and ſealed this letter, ſhe held it in her hands, without knowing what ſhe did. She broke the ſeal of her letter, and, ſeizing the pen, gave that utterance it afforded to her paſſion; and amidſt the effuſions of ardent love ſhe mentioned the attempt ſhe had made to ſee him.

Markoff's boſom could not contain the emotions of his ſoul on reading this letter. The cool, prudential, firſt part was overturned by the concluding poſtſcript.

Maria ſtood at the window, looking towards the village. "No," ſaid ſhe to her-

ſelf, " he muſt not come.—I have forbid
" him, as he values my life. Let me en-
" deavour to compoſe myſelf. Having re-
" ſolved, and executed my reſolve by that
" letter, that we muſt wait for a happier
" period, why this fever of deſire in my
" ſoul yet to behold him? I will avert my
" eyes from the village—Oh, how I ſhake!
" —Can he love me, and obey my man-
" date? Will he not ſtand upon that ſnowy
" plain, and wave his handkerchief? The
" village is ſurrounded with woods—can
" Markoff be gone without making me
" one ſignal of love! Ungrateful man!
" No! no! no! Where am I? Did I hear
" him ſpeak? Maria! Markoff!"

The night cloſed: the diſtracted Maria walked in her chamber, ſtill ſearching through the gloom for Markoff—ſtill wiſhing to ſee, not him, but rather ſome friendly ſpirit bearing his ſhape and air. A peaſant near to the windows held out a letter.—Maria anxiouſly enquired, but with a ſoft voice, from whom it came. It was the count Markoff himſelf! " Where is the count?" ſaid Maria;

Maria; and ſtretched out her hand for the letter. "My Maria!" replied the count; and laying hold of the branches of a tree which ſtood near the window, he climbed up, and entered it.

The young lady ſtared wildly at him, unable to reſiſt or to ſpeak. He aſſured her, he would inſtantly depart, when he had once more impreſſed upon her lips the ſeal of love. He threw his arms eagerly around her, and held her to his panting breaſt.—The hours glided away unſeen; nor were they awakened from their dream, but with the ſteps of the baron approaching to the chamber door. The imagination of a woman, which is ever quick, either to her relief, or to her deſtruction, ſuggeſted to Markoff to hide himſelf in an empty cheſt, which happened to be in the room. The baron's viſit was to enquire, as he often did, after his favourite child; as he had heard ſomething of her indiſpoſition. At times, when the recollection of the family of Markoff was loſt, he behaved as a fond fa-

ther, but this dreadful recollection was never loſt for a day's continuance.

The baron left his daughter, without the leaſt ſuſpicion of the preſence of the ſon of his rival.

LET-

LETTER XLVII.

The History of Maria Feodorovna concluded.

Ingria, July 1791.

MARIA approached the fatal cheſt. She opened it. The count was aſleep, or affected to ſleep. He was aſleep, to wake no more! The head of the cheſt had been, in a hurried moment, ſhut cloſe upon him, or had fallen ſo. There remains no doubt that the count, upon feeling the inconveniency, and want of air, could have relieved himſelf, and perhaps had gently attempted to do it; but finding his attempt attended with ſome noiſe, which might have betrayed a woman whom he valued more than life, to the rage of a father, he had ſubmitted to death.

It is impoſſible for the imagination to conceive the ſituation of Maria when ſhe

found the lifeleſs corpſe of Markoff! She continued for ſome time to believe that the count was affecting ſleep, and reproached him for playing the fool. At laſt ſhe pulled him with ſome violence and anger: the body fell again into the cheſt. She ſcreamed; and fortunate would it have been had the baron heard this cry of horror. Dreadful as her ſituation was, the idea of her father's wrath added to her miſery. Mad with agony, ſhe claſped the body of the count, calling upon his name, and, at calmer intervals, uſing every endeavour to reſtore him to life in vain.

The ſilence of the night was diſturbed with the ſighs, the ſhrieks of Maria, now reclining upon the corpſe, now at her window tearing her hair, and imploring Heaven to end her exiſtence. The morning began to dawn—ſhe rouſed from her diſtracted melancholy, and thoughtful of what the light of day and her furious father were to diſcover. The ſlave who is appointed watchman to every houſe throughout Ruſſia is the only perſon readily to be procured during the

the night, and is generally an elderly man. He is employed in the meaneſt offices during that part of the day not allotted to ſleep.

To this wretched domeſtic, whoſe lodging is a ſort of crib within the gates, the unfortunate Maria applied. The ſlave at her coming kneeled, and touched her ſhoe with his forehead, craving her protection. She deſired him to riſe, and informed him he ſhould have it, as well as a ſum of money, if he would keep a ſecret, and faithfully ſerve her: ſhe diſcovered her misfortunes, and deſired that he would remove the corpſe, and bury it in the adjoining foreſt. The ſlave felt a conſequence he had never felt before. She gave him money, but he knew that the baron would give him more to betray her. That ſlave, who but a moment before had never dared to look up to the daughter of his lord, and who was accuſtomed to eſteem both as deities, on whom his all, his very life depended: that wretch, who was happy to find a bed in the corner of her father's ſtable, and daily receiving chaſtiſement from the care of his ſurly maſter and fellow ſervants,

vants, who look down upon the watchman as an inferior being, dared at once to form a wiſh to poſſeſs the perſon of Maria! He began, without much ceremony, to uſe freedom with the counteſs. Overpowered as ſhe was with deſpair and grief, ſhe ſtruck the villain: for a moment ſhe forgot her ſorrows, and, reſuming the dignity of her rank, ſhe bade him begone. But it was too late: the ſlave knew her ſecret, nor was there any other aſſiſtant to be had. The villain knew this; and, pretending to go to the baron to inform him, Maria called him back. He obeyed with ſullen importance. He took the ſilver and gold trinkets which ſhe now added to the firſt preſent—he followed her towards her chamber—he ſtopped ſuddenly, and ſwore that if ſhe did not inſtantly ſubmit to his embraces, he would directly acquaint the baron with all. Maria, in her turn, fell upon her knees to the ſlave: ſhe entreated and beſought him, with every ſoothing expreſſion, and with a promiſe of freedom and wealth. She held by the ſlave, while he endeavoured to rid himſelf

himſelf in order to proceed to the baron's bed-room. She fainted in the ſtruggle to detain him.

The villain turned, beheld his prey, and ſeized upon it.

The ſavage reſorted to the chamber, where lay the corpſe of Markoff. He carried it to the woods, and, cutting the throat, and otherways diſfiguring it, left it a prey to animals leſs ferocious than himſelf.

Maria awoke to a new ſcene of woe. The baron obſerved the melancholy brooding upon her mind, and gueſſing that the cauſe related to the deteſted family of Markoff, abuſed her with his uſual rudeneſs. The diſtreſſes of this ill-fated lady were not to end here. The ſlave renewed his addreſſes, and with the ſame threats of informing the baron, adding, that he would accuſe her of the murder of the count.

Maria, as yet guiltleſs, committed a fault unbecoming of her rank and innocence: but the accuſation againſt her is ſolely for the want of fortitude. A crime once committed, appears leſs hideous: this lady had

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as yet committed none; but ſhe knew of her diſgrace, and felt herſelf degraded, and, in her own eyes, an outcaſt of ſociety. The ſlave not only threatened to accuſe her of murder, but of proſtitution with Count Markoff. He threatened to expoſe her proſtitution with himſelf as voluntary on her part, and the price of ſervice and ſecrecy.

Maria might have perhaps got over the dread of her father's wrath; but the accuſation of murder and proſtitution, not merely to the count, but to the vileſt of her father's domeſtics, was a ſtumbling-block that ſhe had not ſtrength to paſs. It is always dangerous to imagine ourſelves paſt recovery in any ſituation. To avoid a public, ſhe ſubmitted to a private ſhame. Familiarity made the ſlave now inſolent: he forced her even to come to his wretched hovel, and diſmiſſed her with contempt. Nay, he grew tired of her, and ſought how he could ſell her favours to others.

He forced her, by repeating the former threats, to receive whomſoever he brought to her bed. Here one is apt to loſe all pity for

for this lady. It will be urged that her ſecret was now betrayed to others, and ſhe had no longer the apology juſt mentioned for ſubmitting to proſtitution. But the ſlave found little difficulty in perſuading her, that his friends would keep the ſecret as well as himſelf; or, if ſhe had little faith in this, the chance of their keeping it ſhe preferred to the certainty of its being inſtantly told by her ſavage tyrant, if ſhe refuſed to comply.

The wretched Maria never again beheld with a ſmile the morning dawn. Her eyes dejected, her colour pale; ſhe ſtarted from her glaſs, and, throwing her clothes careleſsly about her, ſhe ſupported with pain, while with her father, the appearance of eaſe and happineſs.

To multiply his gains, the ſlave was not always ſatisfied with the admiſſion of only one viſitant at a time. He dragged her to ſome neighbouring cottage, where were generally aſſembled, at the dead hour of night, ſeveral of the wealthy inhabitants of the country. The hour arrived when Maria

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was to be freed from contamination; and it muſt be ſuppoſed that ſhe had before entertained the idea of extricating herſelf, and that this idea had ſupported her ſinking mind, and had prevented her too from freeing herſelf by ſuicide. Reflection had painted the ſhameful courſe that ſhe walked in, and ſhe ſaw no end to her ſorrows. The pride of rank, roufed with repeated inſult, determined upon revenge. Female nature yet revolted, and ſhe allowed ſeveral opportunities to eſcape.

The brutal raviſhers formed themſelves into a club. Maria was the ſacrifice at their feaſts, and was treated with every indignity which drunken appetite could incite.

The moment of vengeance at laſt comes. Her tyrants, overwhelmed with liquor, ſlept upon the benches of the cottage. Maria ſaw, and her good angel approved the period of freedom and juſtice. She trembled as ſhe approached the ſlave. She invoked Heaven to give her reſolution, and, pulling the knife from the belt of the ſavage, plunged it into his heart. Her forti-

tude

tude rekindled with the ſtroke. She proceeded on to the other villains, who belched their drunken fumes in their ſlumbers, and planted a dagger in every breaſt.

Maria had no ſooner completed the work of vengeance, than ſhe fled home. She beheld from her windows the riſing ſun, and ſhe imagined herſelf a new being in a new world! "Markoff," ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "will "be here! Theſe are the Elyſian fields: "I will go out and meet him." She wandered in the foreſt which covered his body. She knew the ſpot, and kneeled upon his tomb. Her voice denied utterance: her tears watered his grave, and ſhe ſtrewed upon it her flaxen hair. Still awed by her father, ſhe concealed from him her ſorrow, and affected eaſe and mirth.

The idea of having committed murder often threw her into fits of deſpair. She thought to eaſe her conſcience by making a confeſſion to her prieſt. The aſtoniſhed prieſt had never witneſſed ſuch a confeſſion. The wretch betrayed the ſecret to his wife.

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The minions of *juſtice* were ſoon in ſearch of Maria. The relation ſpread throughout all the empire. Her Imperial Majeſty, having ordered a ſtrict examination into the particulars, acquitted this unfortunate lady, and took her under her immediate protection.

Tired of life, now that her ſhame was public, ſhe would have preferred death to all other protection. She begged the Empreſs to allow her to retire to a monaſtery; and here, ſecluded from a world where ſhe found no reſt, ſhe endeavours to forget all but her God and her Markoff. Her cell is ſmall but neat. A few religious books compoſe her library. The picture of Markoff hangs upon her lovely boſom.—She calls it her ſaint, and kiſſes it with fervent devotion. Her firſt office in the morning is prayer: ſhe then goes to the bath, and repeats this in the afternoon. She ſeldom wanders beyond the monaſtic walls; or, if ſhe does, ſhe traverſes the gloomieſt wood, or ſits by a rivulet which encircles her abode; and here, with folded arms and

downcaſt

downcaſt eyes, implores the forgiveneſs of Heaven. The evening bell, the ſhepherd's evening horn, warns her to return to prayers and repoſe.

This ſtory, however romantic it may appear, is yet authenticated beyond all doubt, and is generally believed and known to be true in Ruſſia. Let thoſe who doubt it, recal to mind what wonderful viciſſitudes are common in nations of Aſiatic origin, cuſtoms and manners, and living under the capricious influence of deſpotic governments.

LETTER XLVIII.

Deſcription of the Palace of Zarſko Zelo.—Imperial Baths.—Gardens.—Statues.—Obeliſks, &c.—City of Sophia.—Anecdote of M. Samboriſki, a Ruſſian Clergyman.—Schemes for the Improvement of Agriculture.—Anecdote of the Empreſs Catharine II. and of the Grand Duke.

St. Peterſburgh, Auguſt 1791.

THE climate of this province is not ſo ungrateful as generally repreſented; nor the ſoil, were it properly cultivated. If the ſummer is ſhort, the proceſs of nature in vegetation is equally ſo. I ſhould wiſh to ſee the neighbourhood of Peterſburgh turned into a garden, which it might eaſily be from the cheapneſs and plenty of manure, and from ſo near and ſo good a market. The extenſive foreſt ſurrounding this metropolis

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is ornamented with many palaces and noblemen's villas: the banks of the Neva are gilded with ſparkling turrets upon all ſides. The ſavage natives of the woods have retreated; the bear and the wolf are ſeldom ſeen here. Sometimes in winter they viſit their ancient abodes, and howl vengeance at man for depriving them of thoſe bleak regions.

The road to the palace of Zarſko Zelo lies through this foreſt, and runs twelve miles in a ſtraight line from Peterſburgh, forming a ſpacious avenue, at the end of which you aſcend a ſmall hill. From the top of this height there is a fine view of the ſurrounding provinces of Ingria and Carelia, thickly ſpread with woods. In ſummer their tops repreſent a rich carpeting; and, if you pleaſe, the villages, the furniture of this extenſive drawing-room; the azure ſky, the ceiling.

The Imperial palace of Zarſko Zelo itſelf, which I ſee at a diſtance of five miles, looks like a bird-cage placed upon the carpet. Such are the ideas of earthly

magnificence, where heaven appears in the ſame *landſcape*. The palace of Zarſko Zelo is ſituated in the midſt of a wood, which is cleared away only to make room for the palace and its gardens. The ſituation is by no means favourable. Peter had no doubt made choice of this ſpot to be near, and at the ſame time out of ſight of, a city, which had given him ſo much trouble, and the advantages and glory expected from it at that period, ſo uncertain. The palace, as it is now, or rather was lately, was furniſhed by the Empreſs Elizabeth. Catharine II. has made the moſt ſuperb improvements. It is in front 1200 feet: the breadth and height bear no proportion to the length; having only one range of ſingle apartments, and the windows ſmall and narrow. In the weſt wing are the apartments of her Imperial Majeſty; in the eaſt wing thoſe of the Grand Duke and family. The original architect, as if to dazzle the eye, and to draw it from an exact obſervance of his defects, has gilded not only the moſt part of the inſide, but the

the moſt part of the outſide walls. There is however a grandeur, ſomething which bids defiance to the niceties of taſte, and which marks this palace the ſeat of majeſty and empire. I imagined myſelf again reading the Arabian Nights Entertainments; while I wandered through a labyrinth of magnificence, ſome of the rooms lined entirely with amber, lapis lazuli, agate, and jaſper; others wainſcoted with looking-glaſs; even the floors ornamented with precious ſtones, thrown into different figures, and reſembling the moſt elegant carpeting.

The grand dining-room is, perhaps, the largeſt in Europe. The Empreſs might entertain here ſome of the German princes with all their army! The gallery, a new building, is connected with the weſt wing of the palace; the promenade upon the top is incloſed with glaſs frames, which afford protection from the encroachments of the gnats in a ſummer evening: and the roof, thrown over all, open at the ſides, admits the light, and is a ſhelter from the ſcorching beams of the ſun. Without the en-

cloſed promenade in the centre, is another around it in the open air. Adjoining to the gallery are the Imperial baths, the rooms of which are wainſcoted with agate, jaſper, and lapis lazuli, and the baths fitted up with every decoration and convenience. The modern elegance of the gallery and baths forms a ſtriking contraſt with the ancient ſplendour of the old palace. I like this contraſt. There ſhould be ſomething more in the palaces of princes than the invention of yeſterday. I cannot ſeparate the idea of a palace from Gothic turrets, and high ſounding halls. The recollection that the palace itſelf is not ancient is the only cauſe that we at firſt find fault with the Gothic appearance of it, and eſpecially as the architect has contrived to make it a very bad imitation of the Gothic ſtyle, neither ancient nor modern. The village of Zarſko Zelo ſhould be razed. This is too near the palace, which at preſent is only the largeſt houſe in the village, and the Imperial caravanſera is too nearly aſſociated with the huts of plebeians. Conſidering the flatneſs

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of the ground; without any river, and with woods conſiſting only of barren pine, and birch-trees of a diminutive ſize, it is wonderful to find ſuch beautiful gardens and pleaſure grounds. Catharine is the enchantreſs, who with the magic wand of wealth and power makes rivers to flow in the deſert; hills to riſe amidſt plains, and fruits and flowers to cheer the gloomy wilderneſs. Here are fine pieces of water, procured at an incredible expence; iſlands whoſe ſhores were formed with the ſpade; and upon theſe, and other parts of the gardens, pillars, obeliſks, and triumphal arches, to commemorate the glorious ſucceſſes of Ruſſia, and of thoſe heroes and patriots who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the ſervice of their country. Over the pieces of water are thrown bridges of marble and granite. In the lakes is a ſmall Imperial navy of pleaſure-boats, elegantly built and gilded: yet this collection, ſmall as it is, is greater, both in number and ſize, than the original navy of Peter I. which in the beginning conſiſted of one yawl!

Here Catharine ſometimes ventures upon the faithleſs deep of which herſelf was the creator; yet, to conſole her mighty mind, ſhe hears the thunder of her fleet at Cronſtadt.

Beſides the obeliſks, and ſtatues, and *grey ſtones*, raiſed to the memory of heroes, in the gardens, there is a fine collection of ſtatuary in a ſmall building, called the grotto. Here amidſt gods and goddeſſes is ſeated Voltaire in a chair of ſtate. The gods and goddeſſes ſeem to be attending his levee, and Voltaire, for the firſt time, ſeems to liſten to the gods. In walking through the pleaſure grounds the eye is agreeably ſurpriſed with a view of a Chineſe village, ſituated upon the ſkirts of a foreſt. I looked behind me to ſee if I had paſſed the great wall. It is built after a model ſent from China. When finiſhed it will add much to the artificial beauties of this Imperial reſidence, and is intended for the accommodation of the court during Her Majeſty's ſummer expedition to Zarſko Zelo. One ſtill finds fragments of the old Dutch ſtyle in the gardens, which, however,

ever is gradually rooted out by the modern gardener, and nature copied in its ſtead. The ſummer theatre ſtands in the gardens; and here, amidſt a wilderneſs, the Tragic and Comic Muſes ſtrut their hour upon the ſtage.

Without the boundaries of the pleaſure-ground is ſituated the new city of Sophia. Only a few houſes are yet built, and the firſt built houſe, as in all religious kingdoms, was the church, a very elegant edifice. I muſt give you an anecdote of its prieſt. M. Samboriſki, the pariſh prieſt of Sophia, is chaplain and confeſſor to His Imperial Highneſs the Grand Duke. This gentleman was formerly many years in England chaplain to the Ruſſian embaſſy, and likewiſe accompanied the Grand Duke in his travels through Europe. While M. Samboriſki reſided in England, he made agricultural affairs his particular ſtudy, and ſince his arrival in Ruſſia every ſcheme for the advancement of agriculture has either originated with this gentleman, or the ſchemes of others have been ſubmitted to his conſideration

ſideration and management. He has a conſiderable farm of his own, and the management not only of the Grand Duke's eſtates, but of thoſe of various noblemen, who are anxious to ſhow examples of agriculture and induſtry to their vaſſals. He alſo ſuperintends the education of young Ruſſians who ſhow a taſte for farming, and has ſeveral Engliſh farmers engaged at the different eſtates near Peterſburgh. I have had many converſations with this truly uſeful ſubject, whoſe purſuits and labours will tend ſo greatly to promote the real intereſts of the empire. M. Samboriſki complained to me that, notwithſtanding he did every thing in his power to encourage and reward merit and induſtry in Engliſh perſons, chiefly thoſe who come annually from Yorkſhire with horſes for ſale, they frequently gave themſelves up to drunken habits, and, ſurrounded by peaſants altogether ignorant of farming, ſoon conceived too high ideas of their own importance to obey him, or even to do much for themſelves. Thus he has been at much trouble to no

purpoſe.

purpoſe. But this ought to point out to M. Samboriſki to alter the mode of employing them. If he would eſtabliſh them in farms of their own, upon the ſame plan as in England, and make them depend upon their own induſtry, the Ruſſians and Fins, bred under ſuch farmers, would ſoon repay the landlords, who, in conſideration of having their peaſantry taught the art of agriculture, had granted farms at a trifling rent, and advanced money to the foreign coloniſt.

M. Samboriſki was the firſt prieſt, and I believe is yet the only one, in Ruſſia who has ventured to ſhave himſelf. This ſtep has drawn upon M. Samboriſki the indignation of all the monks; among whom are dignitaries the higheſt of the church, and who conſider the clergy who are allowed to marry as much inferior to them in holineſs. But, now that the paſtor of Sophia has ſhaved himſelf, he is looked upon as an apoſtate. At the conſecration of Sophia-Chapel, M. Samboriſki was puſhed from the altar by the monkiſh archbiſhop,

as unworthy to take the charge of ſouls. I have heard it reported that, even when the Grand Duke led M. Samboriſki to the altar, the archbiſhop ſtill puſhed him back; and that, at this inſtant, Her Imperial Majeſty joined her illuſtrious ſon; and theſe illuſtrious perſonages, leading M. Samboriſki to the altar, by their preſence and determined conduct awed the archbiſhop into compliance. This was a fatal blow to the ſilly bigotry of the monks; and as I can notice ſome young men intended for the church beginning to ſhave, it is probable that the beard will not be much longer one of the articles neceſſary for ſalvation in the Greek litany.

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LETTER XLIX.

Defeat of the Swediſh Fleet—Swediſh Priſoners of War.—Meanneſs and Folly of the Life and Occupation of Military Mercenaries.—Swediſh and Ruſſian Uniforms.—Armorial Bearings.

Ingria, Auguſt 1791.

AS you ſeem to poſſeſs great curioſity to know the naval tranſactions of this country, I ſhall reſume that ſubject. The defeat obtained laſt naval campaign by the Ruſſian over the Swediſh fleet was one of the moſt complete that was ever gained. The crews of the ſhips of war who had been captured were ordered into the inland parts of Ruſſia.

I ſaw a party of two hundred marines and ſoldiers of the king's guards as they marched paſt from Oranienbaum where they had been

been landed. Their officers arrived the ſame day in cabitkas, or covered carts.

The Swedes are, in general, fine-looking men, and in a greater degree than even the Ruſſians falſify the account given of the northern nations by Buffon. The common ſailors and ſoldiers, who marched on foot, had ſome muſic with them, to cheer them in their captivity: they learned that the poſt-houſe was occupied by an Engliſhman, and they gave us an Engliſh tune. The uniform of the ſoldiers is blue, as is that of the officers both naval and military. The naval officers' dreſs a good deal reſembles the Spaniſh habit: a ſhort jacket more or leſs embroidered with gold, with gold epaulets upon each ſhoulder, and trimmed in different parts with yellow. Their breeches and waiſtcoats were likewiſe yellow. The military officers wore longer coats, and ſometimes epaulets of puffed cloth ſtriped with ſilver or gold lace. Their hats were entirely in the Spaniſh ſtyle, and decorated with white or yellow plumes and

yellow

yellow cockades. The white feathers ſeemed to be worn only by general officers.

I received from a captain of a-line-of battle ſhip a plan of the late engagement. He was ſo kind as to draw it for me, after I had ſupped with him and his brother officers. They told me that they knew all Engliſhmen to be their friends, and to wiſh them ſucceſs. They converſed with me freely as with a confidential ſecretary.

We had not a ſufficiency of beds. The officers of the body guards of Guſtavus III, many of whom were decorated with his orders of nobility, lay upon the floor of my chamber, and of the other rooms. I offered my bed, but they politely declined my offer. —This was a picture of war.

One of the officers retired in penſive mood to the window, while the others ſlept. He had taken from his trunk a muſical inſtrument reſembling a guitar. The Swediſh muſic is not the moſt charming; but at this inſtant I felt ſenſations which no concert ever gave me. This gentleman accompa-

nied the inſtrument with his voice:—the air was ſoft and melancholy. He ſtopped ſuddenly, ſurveyed his companions, and then threw himſelf down upon his mattraſs, beſide them.

The officers were attended by a Ruſſian lieutenant, who ſaw every thing provided for them with regard to travelling equipage; but the priſoners paid for their own proviſions, being allowed a proper ſum from the Empreſs.

Admiral Leanker arrived in a chaiſe from Revel. He ſlept at the poſt-houſe: but previouſly to his going to bed, he ordered one cup of coffee to be prepared for him in the morning, aſking at the ſame time how much it would coſt. He is a little man; has a ſharp look; and his noble conduct in action obliges me to forget his anxiety againſt impoſition in the price of a cup of coffee. No trait however of ſuch characters ſhould ever be omitted. His ſhip was taken after a long chaſe and conteſt. The crew of Admiral Leanker's ſhip, and of another brought into

Revel,

Revel, were ſent up the country, under the guard of a troop of Coſſacs. Theſe depredators, having had few opportunities of plunder, reſolved to make the moſt of their convoy; and, having detached a party before the main body, purchaſed proviſions, and retailed them to the Swedes, at an advance of 50 per cent. Nay, they ſold to their priſoners the water from the Ruſſian wells. This new branch of commerce was ſoon put a ſtop to by an expreſs from the court, to whom it was intimated by the Ruſſian officer, who was not able to reſtrain the rapacity of thoſe thieves.

The Swedes expreſſed much uneaſineſs at their being ſent into the inland country, as they apprehended inſults from the lower orders of the natives.

Baron Roſemberg, who was taken priſoner laſt campaign in Finland, and has ſince reſided in Peterſburgh, took poſt-horſes lately in his way to Sweden; a cartel for the exchange of priſoners being ſettled. The Baron is a young man, and, as many of the Swedes do, ſpeaks Engliſh. Since

princes are ambitious enough to go to war, and their ſubjects fooliſh enough to cut each other's throats in diſputes which ſeldom concern them, I think, were I an officer, I ſhould take the firſt opportunity of being made a priſoner, and moſt cheerfully accept my enlargement even upon the hard condition of not having the liberty to have my head ſhot off for my king during the war. I ſee you bluſh at the ignoble idea, and hear you harangue upon the pride, pomp, and circumſtance of battle. Do not forget a ſingle circumſtance, and this will bring you again to your ſenſes:—the wounded and dying—the crowded hoſpitals—the famiſhed ſoldiers—the innocent citizens deſtroyed with their families and houſes during a ſiege—the ſhrieks of murder—the cries of wives and daughters polluted by the conquering heroes, or, perhaps, toſſed upon the ends of their bayonets, and their bodies hewn in pieces with ſabres!

The Ruſſian nobility and gentry have treated the brave Wachmieſter, taken by admiral Greig, in a manner worthy of ſo great

a hero, and of a generous nation. If the Ruſſians encourage privately thoſe of the Swedes who do not fight for their King, at leaſt they approve publicly of thoſe who do. I have particularly obſerved the ſtature and figure of the Swedes, and five or ſix thouſand have paſſed before me of their ſoldiers and ſeamen, a mixture, no doubt, from every part of Sweden. This ſecond view has confirmed me in my former ſtrictures upon M. Buffon, who would repreſent the northern nations as a race of decrepid pigmies. The Swedes are juſt ſuch a mixture as the other nations of Europe preſent. Their fair hair is their chief diſtinguiſhing trait.

We had laſt year in the neighbourhood an encampment of the horſe guards, upon their march to Oranienbaum, where they were ordered as an additional defence of that out-poſt. The uniforms of the guards are blue and gold; thoſe of the officers are very richly embroidered. The uniform of the Ruſſian infantry is green turned up with red; red waiſtcoat and breeches. The artil-

lery have ſcarlet uniforms; the huſſars, blue. The Ruſſian naval uniform is a white coat, turned up with green; white waiſtcoat and breeches. The uniform of inferior naval departments, as the officers of the dock-yards, &c. is a green coat, turned up with white. The officers of police have various uniforms; thoſe of Riga, Revel, and Peterſburgh, blue faced with white or black. The Ruſſian cockade is white. The Coſſack troopers, which form the principal irregular force of Ruſſia, are generally dreſſed in blue; but, except the officers, none can be ſaid to wear uniforms; and even the officers are little diſtinguiſhable from the common men.—The ſuperior commanders alone have embroidered, and other ornaments of dreſs.

The Ruſſians, claiming a title to the Turkiſh dominions, have probably adopted the Turkiſh uniform, which is the ſame in colour; and the ſpread eagle, too, may have ſome reference to the Roman eagle; the preſent Turkiſh provinces in Europe having once formed a part of the Roman empire. Or was the eagle aſſumed by Ivan I.

and

and II. when they extended their dominions, and ſtretched out their talons from Muſcow to Kamtſchatka? But though the eagle happens to be emblematical of the ambition of the ſovereigns who have, or who ſtill aſſume it, the Ruſſian, the Auſtrian, and the Pruſſian, and who ſtill continue to throw out their talons upon neighbouring kingdoms; yet the ſimple *fleur de lis* of France ſhews, that a nation may be very ambitious, even with a cabbage-leaf quartered in their ſtandards.

LETTER L.

Peace between Ruſſia and Sweden.—Rejoicings on that Account.

St. Peterſburgh, Auguſt 1791.

I HAVE, at your deſire, reverted to events, of which, you rightly obſerved, I had not in my letters taken proper notice at the time when they paſſed, and of which, I may add, I can now give a better account: But, before I proceed to any farther accounts of engagements and victories, I ſhall, for the ſake of varying this correſpondence, mention ſome circumſtances relating to their conſequence, the return of peace.—On the concluſion of this, there was great public rejoicing.

The gala days commenced on a Sunday. I went early in the morning to take a walk through the city to view the feſtival. The ſquare in which ſtands the equeſtrian ſtatue of Peter the Great was filled with troops, ſurrounding the effigies of their emperor. The ſtatue ſeemed to be in-

ſpired with life. The blaze of arms, the martial ſounds of the drum and trumpet, ſaluted my ears, as I went to the palace. The ſtreets were lined with infantry: and, juſt as I arrived, the foot guards were marching into the ſquare before the palace; the grenadier companies, crowned with nodding plumes, leading the way. One of theſe regiments, which had particularly diſtinguiſhed itſelf in the war, was received, as it paſſed by the others, with military honours.

Catharine, from her windows, beheld her troops returned from battle. Upon the oppoſite ſide of the palace, the galley fleet lay at anchor in the river, with all their flags and pendants diſplayed from every maſt and yard. The wind blew ſtrong from the weſtward, the flags ruſtled in the ſtorm. Among the galleys, thoſe of the admiral Prince of Naſſau, and of the Chevalier de Litta, ſecond in command, were moſt diſtinguiſhed by their decorations. The decks of all the veſſels were crowded with ſoldiers and ſeamen. Vaſt multitudes of the

citizens were collected together upon the banks of the Neva, to view the fleet; another concourſe, equally numerous, attended in the grand ſquare to ſee their ſovereign, who, as ſoon as divine ſervice was ended, came into the balcony, attended by the ladies of the court. Catharine bowed to her ſubjects, who made the air ring with their ſhouts.

Medals ſtruck to commemorate the peace were thrown amidſt the crowd by two heralds on horſeback. A *feu de joie* was fired by the guards, and from them ran along the line of troops to the moſt diſtant parts of the city. The cannon from the admiralty fired at the ſame time, and immediately afterwards the whole galley fleet ſaluted the ſovereign and ſubjects with their thunder, and with repeated broadſides. This awful peal awakened the attention of the people, who were ſcrambling for the medals. This immenſe body, cruſhed together towards the river, were now involved in clouds of ſmoke, mixed with the continual flaſhes from the mouths of the cannon. The wind

wind at intervals diſperſed the ſmoke, and diſcovered the numerous ſhips and pendants; the whole giving a lively idea of thoſe battles in which they had been lately engaged.

In the evening the galley fleet was ſuperbly illuminated with different-coloured lamps, hung upon the maſts, the yards, the ſides, and among the rigging. The darkneſs of the night, and the wild irregularity of the lamps, which appeared like meteors in the air, had an uncommon, but grand, effect. The city, too, was illuminated in every quarter.

Her Imperial Majeſty dined in public with her naval and military officers upon Tueſday. Upon Thurſday the populace were entertained with oxen roaſted whole, and two fountains of wine. The fountains were erected in front of the palace, and the oxen were placed upon ſtages near them. The fountains were beautifully painted and decorated. The wine ſprung into the air the moment that her Imperial Majeſty appeared in the balcony. The populace

crowded

crowded about the baſons which received the falling vintage, and, uſing their hats for cups, dipped them into the baſons, and quaffed the ſparkling liquor. Another party, at the ſame ſignal, mounted the ſtages, and pulled in a thouſand pieces the ſilken cover which hid the bodies of the oxen; their heads and gilded horns alone being ſeen before. The oxen were then quickly diſſected; and from their bellies, ſtuffed with every ſort of viands, were ſhowered fowls, tongues, hams, joints of veal, mutton, &c. upon the heads of the mobility. I could perceive Catharine ſmiling at the ſtruggles among her ſubjects for loaves and fiſhes: it was only a coarſer picture of the ſame ſtruggles among her courtiers. The fountains and ſtages, from the ſwarms of aſſailants, reſembled bee-hives. The fortunate were repelling thoſe beneath them from getting up, ſecuring their ſeats near the oxen and the wine, and diſtributing to their friends a leg of mutton, or a hatful of the juice of the grape.

In walking home I found it eaſy to overtake the honeſt Ruſſians; moſt of whom had

had burdens which they found difficult to carry. Every faithleſs puddle betrayed their feet. They were in general boaſting of having got drunk with wine like gentlemen!

On the ſucceeding Tueſday, a public maſquerade was given at court, and all ranks admitted by tickets. The Empreſs, the Grand Duke and Ducheſs, with the young Imperial family, the Ruſſian Miniſters, the foreign Ambaſſadors, the naval and military officers, the principal inhabitants of the city, as well as the loweſt claſſes, were aſſembled together. The grand ball-room was allotted for the polite part of the aſſembly, and here they continued dancing the moſt part of the night. Her Imperial Majeſty appeared in this room about ten o'clock, but ſoon retired. The Grand Duke and Ducheſs, arm in arm, walked through every room—and with ſome difficulty, the crowd was ſo great. Beſides the aſſemblage in character and dreſſes, and in dominos, were an equal number in their ordinary habits; which, however, were more

more curious and various than the others. The Ruſſian boor, the Finlander, the Coſſac, the Tartar; Turks, Polanders, and many others, in their native robes, and ſpeaking together the different languages of their nations, preſented a group of ſingular variety. The Swediſh and Ruſſian officers, in their reſpective uniforms, were now walking ſide by ſide, or mixing in the dance.

The gala days ended with fire-works, which were played off in a field adjoining to the ſummer gardens. A ſmall wooden building was fitted up for the accommodation of the Imperial family, fronting this field; and ſtages fitted up around it for the conveniency of the public. The firing of cannon announced the approach of Catharine, and a ſky-rocket ſoon after gave the ſignal to begin. The temple of Janus opened its gates; the furies hiſſed, and toſſed their flaming brands within it; the thundering of cannon and of muſketry declared the raging of war. Peace ſucceeded, and the gates of Janus were ſhut. The temple

of

of Minerva blazed forth, and moved towards the place where her Imperial Majeſty was ſeated; the temple of Janus, at the ſame time, removing to a diſtance. The Imperial initial was emblazoned, and appeared amidſt a glory playing round it. Another temple diſplayed the bleſſings of peace, of ſcience, of agriculture and commerce, while two palm branches flouriſhed, one at each ſide. This temple was perhaps more emblematical of the ſituation of Ruſſia than her Imperial Majeſty intended.—The peaceful arts are too frequently in Ruſſia ſurrounded and incommoded with the fire-works of war. The whole concluded with a grand *feu de joie;* the Imperial eagle ſoaring in the ſky: when peace and ſilence were reſtored. The ſummer gardens were ſuperbly illuminated. The cloudy ſky was deeply tinged with the blaze from all ſides, and gave the idea that the gods were rejoicing at the return of peace among men. As I went home, I ſaw the young Princeſſes coming to the ſummer gardens in their carriage, to view the

the pleaſing ſcene there. They were not permitted to go ſooner; the noiſe of the fire-works would have been too harſh for their infant ears.

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LETTER LI.

Winter Landſcape.—Hunting.—Ruſſian and Finland Peaſants.

Ingria, November 1791.

I AM never ſo happy as when in the country, even in the midſt of a Scythian winter. The villages are now all covered with ſnow; the landſcape is overſpread with a ſheet of pure virgin white, interſperſed with black woods, but whoſe tops are dreſſed in winter uniform.

I imagine that I hear the prowling wolf in the night; yet that animal very ſeldom comes near the habitations of men. I am juſt returned from hunting thoſe ſavages.

The huntſman in the ſervice of the noble proprietor of the adjoining eſtate gave notice this morning, that he had diſcovered the

the track of the wolves, and ſummoned the tenants to aſſiſt him in deſtroying them. In winter the wolves can do little or no miſchief, as the cattle are all within doors; but, as they are very deſtructive in ſummer to the herds, the peaſants take the favourable opportunity, when the ſnow betrays their haunts, to leſſen the number of thoſe robbers. About fifty or ſixty Finlanders were ſoon collected, armed with clubs. The nets were put into a ſledge. I went in another ſledge, and carried a muſket with me. Upon our arrival at the woods, the nets were hung upon the branches of the trees, about five feet diſtance from the ground, being the depth of the nets, and they extended an Engliſh mile around that part of the foreſt where the wolves lay. The nets thus placed, the Finlanders were ſtationed near them, and upon the outſide, hiding themſelves behind buſhes. All this is execute with moſt profound ſilence. Another party, when every thing is in readineſs, ſurround that part of the foreſt to which the nets have not reached, to prevent

the

the wolves from eſcaping that way, and, gradually advancing, ſet up a dreadful howling; and, at the ſame time, firing muſketry, they drive the game into the ſnares. The wolf, when he approaches them, makes a leap. He ſeldom clears them, though the height is only five feet, but he falls upon the net, and is entangled. The nets are ſlender, and would ſoon be torn in pieces, and the wolf eſcape. The peaſants are active to prevent this, and inſtantly aſſault him with their clubs. The animal is overpowered, after making a fierce reſiſtance, and, being tied with ropes, is put into a ſledge, and carried to the village, generally alive. At this hunt, ſeveral wolves approached the nets; but, ſeeing the guard, returned, and attempted to eſcape at other parts, or boldly to puſh their way through the hunters who were driving them into the nets, and who could only give thoſe fleet animals a paſſing blow. One of them entangled himſelf at a place where a very old peaſant was ſtationed. The Finlander ſtruck the wolf ſeveral times; but with a feeble arm, and the ſavage got off.

Another wolf advanced nearly to the ſame ſpot: the old man renewed his ſtrokes, and calling for aſſiſtance, which ſoon arrived, the wolf was beat down and ſecured. I heard the ſhout of victory, and ran to the ſcene of action. The animal no longer ſtruggled: he lay in the ſledge, the blood ſtreaming from his head, and eyed with ſeeming calmneſs the ſurrounding peaſantry, who were ſtill puſhing at him with their clubs, reproaching him for the depredations he and his companions had made upon their herds, recounting their ſeveral loſſes, threatening ſevere puniſhment, and, indeed, partly executing their threats inſtantly upon the ſullen priſoner. I induced them to deſiſt, until a ſpecial jury had given ſentence. It was an old, large and bold-looking devil. We carried him away in triumph. He wanted an eye, which he had probably loſt in ſome former narrow eſcape, or, like other thieves, in ſome diſpute on a diviſion of plunder in the foreſt. The peaſantry no longer inſulted him with blows, but they continued to pour upon the wolf a great deal of perſonal

ſonal reflection, and the word *canaille*, common to the Ruſſian boors, and not long ſince to French gentlemen, was liberally beſtowed. Where I was ſtationed with my club, for I had given my gun to that party who drove in the game, I ſaw a wolf flying towards me. I unluckily called to the peaſants to come to my aid. The animal took the alarm, and directed his courſe another way. The bearded Finlanders were very angry with me; but this is my firſt expedition; I will learn to hold my tongue for the future, until I have got at leaſt one blow at the enemy among the nets. Call me coward, if you pleaſe, but the truth muſt be out—I was a little frightened. The hunters were making the woods echo with a ſort of war-whoop. I could not be ſure that only one wolf was approaching me—there might be two—three—a dozen! There might be a crony bear among them.—I ſaw the ſavage indiſtinctly among the buſhes. He might be a tiger: I had only the words of the peaſants to make me think alone of wolves: and then, again, what will

ſurpriſe you, I was reciting Thomſon's verſes at the inſtant—

By wintry famine rous'd———
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave!
Burning for blood, bony, and ghauſt and grim!
Aſſembling wolves in raging troops deſcend.

The peaſants had never heard of Mr. Thomſon, or his verſes—they thought of the wolf's ſkin; or, if a bear appeared—ſo much the better.

The old man gained the laurels of the day: I ſaw an expreſſive glow of ſatisfaction upon his features, and he recorded his former exploits and ſucceſs in hunting, with much animation. The chief huntſman is a venerable Ruſſian, with a beard falling down to his girdle. He rode upon horſeback, and viſited every place to ſee all things in order before he permitted the ſport to begin. He rides out in the morning, when there has happened the preceding night or day a new fall of ſnow; upon whoſe ſmooth ſurface he can trace the ſavage wanderer with certainty, and know the number, too, which have entered any particular thicket. When he

has

has diſcovered their haunt, he next makes a circuitous journey around it, to view whether or no they remain, or have gone out at another part; and puts up marks to inform himſelf again of the track of his journey, or of the fitteſt ſpots where to place the nets. Having aſſured himſelf that the wolves are reſting in the thickets, he haſtens to the neighbouring villages, and procures aſſiſtant hunters. One end of the net is generally placed oppoſite to the track where the beaſts had entered, as they often return the ſame road. This wolf now taken had his legs untied upon his being houſed; but the Finlanders would not truſt him with the free exerciſe of his jaws. He was ſent to Peterſburgh as a curioſity.—They are ſeldom caught alive, or rather allowed to live, as the peaſants prefer killing them for the ſkin. Nor are there many killed or found near Peterſburgh; and, however ſtrange it may ſeem, there are kept in the Ruſſian metropolis collections of wild animals, bears, wolves, &c. to ſhow to the inhabitants, who, notwithſtanding that they

are ſurrounded by foreſts in which theſe animals dwell, ſeldom ſee them but in ſuch collections. Bear-baiting is a Sunday's entertainment to the mobility in the city. For this purpoſe excellent dogs are kept, moſtly of the Daniſh breed. Two dogs are allowed to the attack upon the bear, who, previouſly to ſuch engagements, is deprived of his teeth and claws. Notwithſtanding this, he proves an overmatch for the dogs, and the keepers are under the neceſſity of relieving thoſe animals with their ſticks from the awful embraces of Bruin. The dogs are amazingly eager in the aſſault; but having enjoyed one or two hugs of their antagoniſt, they ſeem very cool and cautious in renewing the battle. The bear receives his enemies with open mouth, and rearing upon his hinder legs. The attack of the dogs is confined to the ears, the pain of which, being repeatedly torn, quickens the motions and ferocity of the bear, who then breathes defiance, courts the engagement, and, notwithſtanding the keepers are cloſe upon him, directs all his fury againſt the dogs.

An old bear is the moſt ſavage-looking animal in the creation. The young ones are very playful. I have ſeen them not above fifteen inches in length, and juſt taken from the mother. They are always running about; and when they feel a check from the cord they are tied with, they rear upon their hinder legs, in the ſame manner with the oldeſt ones, and return. They eat any thing given to them, and ſuck your hand, if you hold it out, very inoffenſively.

I have got a-talking about wild animals. Let me entertain you with an account of others not quite ſo wild. It is of a Finland bride and bridegroom. The bridegroom is a young fellow of ſeventeen. He has been in love theſe ſix months. Don't blame the poor girl; ſhe too has been dying of love. They are both clothed in ſheepſkins; but this is nothing to the purpoſe. Well then, they had no money; and the bridegroom told me, with tears in his eyes, that the wedding expences would amount to ten roubles, or thirty ſhillings, in ſalt, black bread, butter, oil, garlic, and brandy!

The money was at laſt provided: the wedding-day fixed; and the gentleman who does me the honour to be my foot-man, cook and butler, gave me notice, that his ſervices muſt be diſpenſed with for a day. This is the very day of their nup-tials. The Finland maidens are all dreſſed to the beſt in ruſſet and ribbons. The laſſes think of what they muſt all come to, and ſmile, and ſing, and ſigh. It is Sun-day. The wedding-folks drove paſt my windows in ſledges to church, and return-ed in the evening, ſinging in full chorus. The female charioteers beat time with their whips. The bride and bridegroom alone, look as if they were afraid of each other.

The peaſants, Ruſſians and Finland-ers, for the moſt part, marry in their own villages. Their affections ſeldom wander to the neighbouring villages; but they are no way reſtricted in their choice: only the woman muſt be a ſlave to the ſame lord with her huſband. The fe-male thus changes her maſter and place; the males never can. The Finlanders

are leſs polite to their women than the Ruſſians. It is common to ſee ſledges crowded with the men going to church or other places, upon holidays, while the women are picking their way amongſt the ſnow upon foot. The Ruſſian boor, on the contrary, ſits by his female friend or acquaintance in the ſledge, embracing her with his arms, and not unfrequently kiſſing her without ceremony, in the moſt public manner. The Ruſſian poſſeſſes a ſoul brave and manly; the Finlander is cowardly and mean in all his actions.

LETTER LII.

The Jealouſy of Swedes and Ruſſians of the Britiſh Officers in their Service.—Ruſſian Navy.—Daniſh and Swediſh Navies.—Propoſed Expedition of a Ruſſian Squadron round the World.—Anecdotes of Captain Trevenen.

St. Peterſburgh, December 1791.

I IMAGINE myſelf at home in this metropolis: the houſe is filled with Britiſh officers naval and military. The governor of Peterſburgh is of Britiſh extraction, the deſcendant of general Bruce, who with ſome other gentlemen headed the emigrants from Scotland upon the murder of Charles I. When I examine the court almanack, I find the names of Balmain, Balnaves, and many other Britiſh ſurnames among the liſt of the Ruſſian nobles.

A party of thoſe emigrants went to Swe-

den, and hence we find two Britiſh ſurnames among the higher ranks of the Swedes.

The Ruſſian and Swediſh armies oppoſed to each other at this moment are both of them commanded by officers deſcended of Britiſh parents. Count Hamilton commands the Swedes, and General Mitchelſon the active part of the Ruſſian troops. Numbers of other Britons, chiefly Scots, are found ranged upon each ſide, and diſcharging their muſkets in each other's faces! It appears that the Swiſs are not the only people who let out their blood to hire.

Both Swedes and Ruſſians call us intruders, and ſay that they would be much obliged to us to permit them to defend their own country. The Ruſſians certainly need us in their navy. Their naval officers have courage, but they have few opportunities of practiſing their profeſſion. The Baltic is little better than a fiſh-pond for the exerciſing of fleets, and the northern navies have no buſineſs in the Atlantic and Paciſic. The Ruſſians, indeed, ſometimes pay a viſit

a viſit to the Mediterranean to frighten the Turk: and the Empreſs has long attempted to procure ſome iſland in this ſea, where her fleet might occaſionally retreat, and be laid up or refitted. It is to be regretted that we did not ſell Minorca to Catharine, before it was otherwiſe diſpoſed of.

The Ruſſian fleet conſiſts of between 30 and 40 ſail of the line in the Baltic, and ten in the Black Sea. They are moſtly built of fir, and at Archangel in the White Sea, where Peter firſt commenced his naval operations. Alexander, who himſelf was a great copier, was copied by Peter. The Czar put to ſea in a ſmall veſſel, to view the elements which he had in his mind to ſubdue. He modelled his fleet, like the Romans, from a boat found accidentally; and like the Romans he ſoon defeated the navy of the Swediſh Carthage.

Ruſſia produces oak, but of a diminutive ſize, and inferior quality. The fir-built navy ſoon decays, and thereby, from the neceſſity of being frequently rebuilt, creates an enormous expence. The chief builder at Peterſburgh

burgh is an Engliſhman of the name of Coleman. It is wonderful what fine veſſels he makes from the pooreſt materials. If this empire furniſhes no timber fit for conſtructing the hulls of ſhips, it abundantly ſupplies the beſt materials for rigging, and all manner of ſtores, in hemp, tar, iron, &c. England ſends to Ruſſia for rigging for her navy; Ruſſia ſhould ſend to England for a navy to her rigging; and it would be the beſt economy. The naval eſtabliſhments coſt the empire a conſiderable part of its revenues, and fifty thouſand of its brave ſubjects, who are annually ſacrificed in hoſpitals upon the moſt wretched ſyſtem of management.

The navy of Denmark conſiſts of 30 ſail of the line; that of Sweden of 30 ſail, and the Ruſſian of 40 ſail. The whole northern fleet of courſe amounts to 100 ſhips of the line.

Such a fleet could with difficulty find room to engage in the Baltic, to contend for the dominion of which they are fitted out. The Baltic does not bear ſuch a proportion

portion to this fleet, as the navy of Lilliput would do to the Baltic.

The northern powers lay themſelves open to the ſevereſt cenſure in oppreſſing their reſpective ſubjects to ſupport ſuch an uſeleſs force, and to the ſevereſt ridicule for their folly and extravagance.

Before the war broke out with Sweden, the Empreſs had propoſed to ſend a ſquadron round the world, under the command of an Engliſh officer. Captain Trevenen, who had performed the circumnavigation of the globe with the celebrated captain Cook, was appointed to take charge of this ſquadron. The war with the Swedes put a ſtop to this expedition: the veſſels built on purpoſe for the voyage are now rotting in Cronſtadt harbour; and captain Trevenen was prevailed upon to accept the commiſſion of poſt-captain in the Ruſſian fleet. This gentleman has become a great favourite with the Empreſs, in conſequence of having diſtinguiſhed himſelf under admiral Greig, as has been already noticed.

No other ſquadron but a Ruſſian could find

find anchorage in their own harbours at both extremities of the earth, and belonging to the ſame continent and uninterrupted empire. It is wonderful that an inland and almoſt unknown kingdom, tributary to every Tartar horde, bordering upon no ſea, ſhould, in the courſe of one hundred and fifty or two hundred years, ſwell out upon all ſides, conquer all nations, and have her coaſts waſhed by every ſea, and every ocean! The northern ocean rolls his waves upon the coaſts of Siberia, Lapland, and Samoyeda; the Baltic ſea, upon the ſhores of Finland and Livonia; the Black ſea and Caſpian, upon Ruſſian Tartary: and the Indian and eaſtern oceans upon the ſhores of Kamtſchatka.

But with all theſe ſeas and oceans Ruſſia has no occaſion for ſo large a fleet. In all this vaſt extent of dominion, ſhe has no maritime ſtate worth her apprehenſion, except the Danes and Swedes, whoſe intereſt it is equally with hers to make a bonfire of their navies.

Upon the death of admiral Greig, captain

tain Trevenen would have been appointed to the command of the fleet, could the Empreſs have with propriety promoted him ſo rapidly. A jealouſy, very natural as well as laudable, in the native officers prevented this. They began to ſpeak very openly of the Empreſs's predilection for Britiſh officers, who, they ſaid, ran away with all the fame and merit of the naval ſervice. —The Empreſs appointed a Ruſſian for her admiral, and he has been very fortunate, and perhaps deſervedly ſo.

Captain Trevenen, notwithſtanding his misfortunes in the naval campaign of 1789, continued in the ſame favour with Her Imperial Majeſty. In the ſpring of 1790 this gentleman was ſeized with ſudden illneſs. Frequent meſſages from court ſhewed the attention of Her Majeſty, and the captain, in return for ſuch diſtinguiſhed honour paid him, embarked at a moment that his ſervices were much needed, notwithſtanding he was not recovered from his diſtemper. He choſe the oldeſt of the ſhips of war. He ſaid, he would not again run the riſk of

loſing

loſing a new veſſel among the rocks of the gulph of Finland.

The Ruſſian rear-admiral Powaliſkin, with captains Trevenen, Theſiger, and two other Ruſſian captains, were ſtationed in the channel through which the Swediſh fleet were to attempt to eſcape from Wyburg Bay. Theſe ſhips received the whole fire of the Swediſh fleet. Captain Trevenen was wounded by a cannon-ball, which took away a great part of his hip; and, notwithſtanding every thing was done to ſave the life of this valuable officer and worthy man, by his very ſkilful ſurgeon Mr. Macdougal, a mortification enſued, and he expired a few days after that victory, which ruined the Swediſh King in the loſs of his fleet.

The ſame ball which carried with it the fate of the gallant Trevenen, broke the leg of his firſt lieutenant Mr. Atkin, and ſhot a third officer through the body, lodging finally in the oppoſite ſide of the ſhip. It is remarkable that captain Trevenen's widow ordered the ball to be brought to her;

and ſhe keeps this ſtrange memorandum of a huſband whom ſhe tenderly loved.

The war now at an end, the hoſtile navies returned to port. The relics of the Swediſh fleet were blocked up in Sweaborg or Helſingfors. One part of the Ruſſian ſquadron went, as uſual, to Revel; the other to Cronſtadt. Few of them, except thoſe which were ſtationed in the channel, were much hurt; but it was a ſhocking ſight to behold the wounded, dying, and ſick in the hoſpitals. At the end of every war, the wounded and dying ſhould be carried on biers in the front of royal and imperial palaces, that ſovereigns might ſee for a moment the calamities which too frequently their ambition ſolely brings upon their ſubjects.

I ſaw ſome who had but one arm, others who had loſt both legs: a third had his face rendered hideous with ſcars; a fourth groaned under the agony of amputation. Death in every form ſeemed to preſide in this aſſemblage of human miſery, and carts were

were crowded with coffins containing the dead for interment.

I haſtened from this awful ſcene, and was happy to forget it amidſt the noiſe of the rejoicings already mentioned for the peace at Peterſburgh.

LETTER LIII.

Naval Campaign, Ruſſia with Sweden—Action near Fredrickſham.—Capture of the Ruſſian Galley Fleet.—Action at Revel.—Defeat of the Swedes.—Action off Cronſtadt, between the Ruſſian and Swediſh grand Fleets.—Defeat of the Swediſh grand Fleet in Wyburg Bay.—Anecdote of Guſtavus III.—Defeat of the Ruſſian Galley Fleet under the Command of Prince Naſſau.—Anecdotes of the Britiſh Officers killed.

St. Peterſburg, November 1791.

THE Swedes commenced the naval campaign of 1790, ſo early as the month of April, with an attack upon the Ruſſian town called Baltic-Port, near the mouth of the gulph of Finland, which they laid under contribution. About the ſame time the Swediſh galley fleet at Helſingfors ſailed towards Fredrickſham, where lay the flotilla of Ruſ-

ſia,

ſia, but in no condition to receive an enemy. The Swediſh admiral, notwithſtanding ſo fair an opportunity offered to make an eaſy prey of the Ruſſians, delayed the attack for two days.

During this time the Ruſſians added ſeveral more galleys, which were unrigged at the arrival of the Swedes, to their fleet. The Swedes, after an obſtinate engagement, took every veſſel oppoſed to them, being much ſuperior in number and force. Had the Swedes commenced the attack inſtantly upon their arrival, it is uncertain but the fortreſs of Fredrickſham would have fallen into their hands. This unpardonable neglect gave time to receive a reinforcement of troops into the garriſon; and the beſiegers, as if determined to prove their folly, made an attack upon the town with only a ſmall part of their fleet. Their ſhips and men were nearly deſtroyed.

The capture of the Ruſſian galleys was a heavy blow. The news of it, however, only excited the greater activity in the Ruſſians. The Empreſs gave orders that another

other fleet ſhould be built and ready for ſea in a few weeks! The mallet reſounded upon the banks of the Neva and at Cronſtadt, and this new fleet of ſmall armed ſhips and gun-boats was actually ready in a few weeks.

The Swedes had formed the beſt plan poſſible for annihilating the Ruſſian navy, and muſt have nearly, or altogether, ſucceeded; but owing to ſome infatuation and irreſolution, or perhaps diſaffection of many of their officers, they totally failed of ſucceſs. The attack upon Baltic-Port was not followed ſo ſoon as it ought to have been by another upon Revel. In this inſtance again they gave the Ruſſians notice to prepare themſelves; and every expedition was uſed to fit out the Ruſſian ſquadron lying at Revel, and conſiſting only of ten ſail of the line, and three or four frigates.

The harbours of Cronſtadt and Revel cannot, ſeparately, contain the whole of the Ruſſian navy; and as the latter harbour is ſeldom frozen up, the Swedes could, either in March or April, have attacked the ſquadron

dron lying here, while the greater part of the Ruſſian fleet were froſt-bound at Cronſtadt.

The duke of Sudermania, with twenty-two ſail of the line, appeared before Revel. The ſhips under admiral Tchitchigow lay in the beſt poſition, and with ſprings upon their cables. The enemy's fleet entered the harbour. The headmoſt of them received the raking fire of the Ruſſians as they advanced; and the wind coming contrary, and two of the Swediſh ſhips getting aground, made it adviſable for the others to retreat. The Ruſſians captured one of the veſſels; the other was burnt by her own crew. If the duke of Sudermania could depend upon his men and officers, why did he not renew the attack ſome future day, inſtead of proceeding to Cronſtadt to attack a fleet nearly equal in force to his own, and with a certainty too of being followed by the Revel ſquadron? When he failed in beating a ſmall fleet, why proceed to attack a greater and in a ſituation more difficult of approach than Revel? It is true, the Ruſſian fleet at Cronſtadt lay in the harbour unrigged. It does not, how-

ever, appear that the duke knew this circumſtance, and he ſlowly proceeded for Cronſtadt, expecting to find the Ruſſian ſhips prepared for him. What negligence was it, not to procure better information? When the royal commander arrived within ſight of Cronſtadt, the Ruſſian fleet was indeed prepared to meet him, and the Revel ſquadron was at his heels. Thus the duke ſeems to have courted the deſtruction which awaited his fleet.

The Swediſh galleys, that had lately proved victorious at Fredrickſham, joined the grand fleet, and approached Cronſtadt at the ſame time. The grand ſcene of action was begun, in which the ancient maritime power of Sweden was, by a ſeries of miſconduct and unforeſeen events, to be totally overthrown; to be deſtroyed without being conquered, or rather without being beaten.

The Ruſſian ſquadron at Cronſtadt, conſiſting of ſeventeen ſail of the line, ſeven of them of 100 guns, which had been equipped with the moſt aſtoniſhing expedition, ſailed under the command of a German officer, admiral Kruſe, and were in a few days fol-

followed and joined by eleven light frigates and armed ſhips, commanded by an Iriſh officer, captain Denniſon.

The Ruſſian fleet lay at anchor, after leaving Cronſtadt, off Craſſna Gorca, a point of land ſeveral leagues diſtant from Cronſtadt, in an irregular line of battle. Next day after the junction between the grand fleet and the frigates, the Swediſh fleet was diſcovered to windward, bearing down, favoured by a weſterly wind, in a line of battle, conſiſting of twenty-three ſail of the line and thirteen frigates. The Ruſſian admiral directly threw out the ſignal to form the line. Both fleets continued under ſail all that night, without coming to action, and were in the ſame poſition to each other in the morning. The weather was hazy: the wind ſhifted to the eaſtward, and the Ruſſian fleet bore down upon the Swedes, engaging with ſeventeen ſhips a line of battle oppoſed to them of thirty-ſix ſail; the whole of the Swediſh frigates having formed the line with the greater ſhips. Both fleets were upon the ſame courſe, on the ſtarboard tack.

Captain

Captain Denniſon remained with the ſquadron of frigates in reſerve, and watching the motions of the Swediſh galley fleet, which hovered about at no great diſtance. Anxious to diſtinguiſh himſelf, and having diſcretionary power to act as he ſaw beſt, he determined to bear down upon the centre of the Swediſh fleet, and to engage them. At this moment he obſerved the Swediſh van attempting to double upon the Ruſſian line of battle. This officer inſtantly bore down upon the van of the enemy; and, though ſupported by only two of his frigates, the others not coming to cloſe action, he ſucceeded in preventing the intended manœuvre of the Swedes. The whole of the Swediſh fleet bore away about ſix o'clock in the morning, after a harmleſs fight of two hours continuance.

In the afternoon of the ſame day, the wind again changed to the weſt. The Swediſh fleet bore down again in a line of battle abreaſt upon their enemies, who waited for them in a line of battle ahead. This engagement laſted four hours. The Ruſſian frigates

were

were not much engaged in this battle. The Ruſſian fleet yielded the victory to the Swedes, and retreated towards Cronſtadt, with a view of drawing the enemy into narrow channels, where they could not employ all their ſhips.

The hoſtile fleets remained near each other, without fighting, until the afternoon of the ſecond day, when, after an action of nearly the ſame continuance as the former, with as little effect, the Ruſſians again gave way. The Swediſh fleet did not purſue in either battle: they could not without imminent hazard from the ſurrounding ſhoals near Cronſtadt, and it was not the buſineſs of admiral Kruſe to court a cloſe engagement with a ſuperior force.

He waited the coming of the Revel ſquadron under the Ruſſian commander in chief. The duke of Sudermania, dreading the approach of this diviſion while he remained ſo near the ſhoals of Cronſtadt, and to be caught between two fires, deſiſted from any farther attack upon admiral Kruſe, and ſailed with a view of intercepting the Revel ſquadron then hourly expected.

Admiral

Admiral Kruſe then followed the enemy, but firſt got ſight of the other diviſion of the Ruſſian fleet under the Siſcar Iſlands. The Venus frigate, captain Denniſon, the ſame day made the ſignal for ſeeing the Swediſh fleet ſteering towards Wyburg Bay, which lies to the weſtward of the Siſcar Iſlands, and conſequently they were paſt and clear of the Ruſſian united fleet, and might have proceeded in ſafety to their own harbour of Sweaborg. The Ruſſian fleet being at the ſame time under ſail, purſued the enemy, and ſoon arrived off the bay where the Swedes had taken refuge. The Swediſh fleet were ſeen lying at anchor in a line of battle. Two narrow channels led into this bay, which were guarded by ſeveral large ſhips.

The Ruſſian fleet kept under way that night; and next day captain Denniſon was ordered with his frigates into the outward bay to ſound; and finding the roadſtead ſafe for the largeſt fleet, the whole came to an anchor, immediately without the Swediſh fleet, and nearly within gun-ſhot of each other.

other. Some banks and rocks ſeparated them. Two line-of-battle ſhips with the ſquadron of frigates were ſtationed to guard the channels, where the Swediſh guard-ſhips lay.

The duke of Sudermania had ſeen the Revel diviſion as he ſailed from Cronſtadt, and had determined to engage it. The Swediſh fleet were ſeen by ſeveral Engliſh merchant ſhips, making towards the Revel ſquadron, and even uſing oars, and having boats a-head of every ſhip towing them nearer their enemies. The Swediſh officers and crews were in the higheſt ſpirits, and the air rung with their ſhouts. The common ſailors and ſoldiers of the Swedes were enthuſiaſtically fond of a ſovereign who accompanied them in all their dangers; and they frequently declared they would follow wherever he led. He led them to deſtruction. Guſtavus, endowed with the moſt heroic courage, did not poſſeſs with this the qualities requiſite in a great commander. Fearing nothing, he gave his orders precipitately, without looking forward to the conſequences.

He ordered his fleet to ceaſe the purſuit, and to go into the bay of Wyburg for the purpoſe of protecting his galley-fleet, who were arrived near it, at a place called Biorka Sound. Did his Swediſh majeſty not know that there was no Ruſſian galley-fleet to attack them, and that no other could do it? The Ruſſian grand fleet could not purſue ſmall boats near the ſhore among the Finland rocks. Prince Naſſau, at this period, was at Cronſtadt, and the galley-fleet not yet collected together. What little pains had Guſtavus taken to procure intelligence which would have ſaved both his fleets!

The Swediſh galley-fleet was engaged in the battles off Cronſtadt. It approached that end of the Ruſſian line ſtretching towards Carelia, and annoyed the Ruſſian ſhips, who could not hurt in their turn ſuch ſmall objects. It conſiſted of ſixty-eight veſſels. The Ruſſian frigates chaſed them into ſhore, but the weſterly winds favoured their eſcape; at the ſame time that the Swediſh grand fleet retreated.

Without proviſion, and, it is reported, with

with no large quantity of powder and ball, King Guſtavus ordered his navy into an enemy's harbour, ſurrounded by an enemy's country and ſuperior fleet! Yet from all theſe difficulties, amidſt all theſe dangers, he might have eſcaped, had not ſome unfortunate accidents occurred.

The whole Swediſh naval force were at this moment ſurrounded by the navy of Ruſſia. The exiſtence of Sweden as a naval power was to be decided in a few days, and hung upon the caſt of a die! Admiral Tchitchigow diſpatched a courier to Her Imperial Majeſty, then at Zarſko Zelo, with news of this critical ſituation of the enemy. Catharine, agitated with hope and fear for the event, obſerved upon the uncertainty of fate. The courier, a young Engliſh lieutenant, forgetting the auguſt preſence he was in, exclaimed, By God! we have them, *Madam!* not a ſhip can eſcape us! Her Majeſty ſmiled, and thanked him for his good wiſhes for the ſucceſs of her arms.

The flotilla commanded by the Prince Naſſau was not yet ready. A part of this arma-

armament lay at anchor near Cronſtadt, waiting for the gun-boats and other veſſels fitting out at Peterſburgh. I had occaſion to paſs, ſeveral times, between Cronſtadt and Peterſburgh by water during this period. I beheld ſmall diviſions of this newly-created fleet rowed by their crews in their voyage to Cronſtadt. The ſight of theſe row-boats filled with ſlaves at the oar, and with ſoldiers briſtling with armour, exhibited the appearance of piratical adventures. The gulph reſounded with the ſtrokes of oars, and with the ſongs of the crews.

Both the grand fleet and galley fleet of Sweden were crowded with ſoldiers; and many of the tranſports had horſes on board, to the number of two or three hundred. While they remained in Wyburg bay, ſeveral fruitleſs attempts were made to penetrate into the country, for what purpoſe I cannot gueſs, unleſs to obtain proviſions at all riſks. The Ruſſian fortreſs of Wyburg, and the numerous land forces of Ruſſia on ſhore, were not to be conquered by ſuch ſmall numbers of troops, and theſe ſtarving for

want

want of food. The King at laſt ſaw his error, but not until the arrival of Prince Naſſau with the Ruſſian flotilla, which added another difficulty to his eſcape, and at a time too when his ſeamen and ſoldiers were diſheartened by famine, and misfortune of all ſorts.

The Ruſſian galley-fleet were joined upon their arrival by captain Denniſon's ſquadron of frigates, and an attack was meditated upon the Swediſh flotilla lying at Biorka ſound. This laſt conſiſted of about ſixty ſail, moſtly gun-boats. The gun-boats are ſmall open veſſels, carrying one piece of cannon in their bows, and another in their ſtern. The attack of the Ruſſians commenced in the night, two days after the arrival of their galleys. The Prince had perhaps ſuſpected an attempt of the Swedes to retreat that night, and wiſhed to come to blows before they got away; or otherwiſe the attack was ill adviſed, ſeeing the frigates in the dark would not venture, near the ſhore and among rocks, to ſupport the gun-boats.

This fight was nothing more than a firing

at random amidſt the clouds of night. The hoſtile fleets only ſaw each other by the flames from the mouths of the cannon, which ſerved for torches. The fire of the frigates was at too great diſtance to do any execution; and the Prince Naſſau, ever eager to diſtinguiſh himſelf, but not verſant in ſea affairs, reprobated captain Denniſon for not hazarding all his veſſels in this blind-man's-buff engagement.

The Swediſh flotilla had, previouſly to this fight, received orders from the King to be in readineſs for a retreat the firſt favourable wind. An eaſterly breeze in the morning was inſtantly ſeized for this purpoſe; and to retreat, not only from famine, but from a ſuperior force, the ſignal was given. The Swediſh galleys retreated by a channel near the ſhore, and were purſued by the Ruſſian galley-fleet and frigates. The grand fleet of Sweden cut, and ſtood out of this fatal bay by another channel, more diſtant from the coaſt: and the Swediſh tranſports by a third channel within both theſe. The channel by which the Swediſh galley-fleet and ſmall frigates

ran,

ran, was guarded by ſeveral Ruſſian light frigates. This retreat was however well conducted; and, although ſeveral gun-boats were taken, the greater part effected their eſcape to Fredrickſham, after being purſued by the Ruſſians as far as Hogland.

The Swediſh gun-boats were manned with ſailors, and were an overmatch for the awkward Ruſſian peaſants who rowed in purſuit of them.

The Swediſh tranſports were leſs ſucceſsful in their retreat. Sailing too near the ſhore to avoid the ſhot of the gun-boats and frigates, many of them got aground, and ſeveral threw the horſes of the dragoons overboard in vain, to lighten the barks, and to get off again. The moſt of the tranſports, their cargoes, their crews, and the ſoldiers, fell an eaſy prey to the Ruſſians. Guſtavus from the deck of his yacht, in which he accompanied the galley-fleet, ſaw the misfortunes of his navy and other veſſels, without being able to relieve them. This royal hero, retreating in a ſmall yacht, had ſeveral of his ſubjects killed by

his ſide; and the veſſel was ſo ſhattered by a ſhot that he was obliged to leave her, and go on board another ſmall veſſel. One of the crew was wounded in the arm—the King tore the order of Vaſa from his ſhoulder, and bound up the wound. Had the particular veſſel been known in which the King was, he would have been eaſily taken, and brought priſoner to Catharine.

The Ruſſians had ſtationed five ſhips of the line in the outward and main channel, under the command of a Ruſſian officer. Theſe five, with ſprings upon their cables, were to oppoſe the whole Swediſh grand fleet as they paſſed, while the reſt of the Ruſſian ſhips under admiral Tchitchigow remained idle ſpectators. The Swediſh fleet, though proceeding with a fair wind, were ſeverely galled by the raking fire of the five Ruſſian men of war. One Swediſh ſhip got aground before ſhe had paſſed the Ruſſian guard-ſhips; but all the reſt of the Swediſh navy paſſed in triumph; and the officers were congratulating each other upon their ſucceſs, when evil

miſchance

miſchance ſuddenly brought upon them calamity and defeat.

The Swedes had prepared two fire-ſhips, whoſe commanders had directions to ſet them on fire when they ſaw that all the Swediſh fleet had paſſed that of Ruſſia. One of theſe blew up without doing any harm to the enemy. The other was avoided as ſhe approached in flames towards the Ruſſian guard-ſhips, by their ſlipping their cables. A Swediſh ſhip of the line was not a great diſtance a-head of this fire-ſhip, into whoſe ſails the flames attracted the wind, and ſhe rapidly approached the Swediſh man of war, which, owing to the narrowneſs of the channel, could not avoid her. The fire-ſhip ran aboard of her, ſet her inſtantly in a blaze, and this ſhip, the fineſt in the fleet, was blown up, and every perſon in her, one excepted, periſhed.

The ſmoke of the late engagement, rendered more thick by this exploſion, was carried by the winds, and involved five or ſix of the Swediſh fleet, then directly a-head of the wreck. The conſequence was their

running aground. Another had got aſhore near the Swediſh guard-ſhips, prior to the accident; and after ſhe had paſſed them. Thus eight or nine ſail of the line had only to be picked up by the Ruſſians. Captain Denniſon took poſſeſſion of the firſt veſſel, which got aground as ſhe lay at anchor, or ſoon after ſhe had cut in Wyburg bay. I had frequent converſations with the captain of this ſhip, whoſe name is Trutiger. He gave me a plan of the ſituation of both fleets. Though he rejoiced at the eſcape of a conſiderable part of the Swediſh fleet, he confeſſed, that, had the Ruſſian admiral made a better diſpoſition of his fleet, not a ſhip of his nation could have eſcaped: and the diſpoſition was, ſimply, to have croſſed the channel with two or three lines of guard-ſhips, with ſprings upon their cables, every one of which lines, ſo advantageouſly ſtationed, muſt have ſo diſabled the Swediſh fleet in paſſing, as to have rendered them incapable of reſiſting the remainder of the Ruſſian navy, and which ought to have been waiting at the mouth of the

channel

channel to receive the enemy as they attempted to fly. Inſtead of ſuch a judicious plan, only five ſhips were oppoſed to twenty-two or twenty-three of equal force with themſelves; and the Ruſſian fleet in the outward bay of Wyburg had not cut or ſlipped their cables, even when the remaining fifteen ſhips of the Swedes had paſſed the line of guard-ſhips.

The ſecond man of war which grounded after paſſing the Ruſſian guard-ſhips ſtill continued firing at the enemy, until all the other ſhips of the Swediſh navy had got clear; when ſhe ſtruck her colours. The Swediſh officers of the veſſels which ran aſhore complained, in ſome converſations I had with them, that the Ruſſians continued firing into them, even when they lay aground and their colours ſtruck. This muſt have been owing to the confuſion, and from their being indiſtinctly ſeen through the ſmoke.

The ſecond Swediſh ſhip that went aſhore, was loſt to the Ruſſians through ſome miſmanagement. She lay upon the edge of a bank; and in the attempt to get

her off, ſhe upſet or tumbled over, whereby many Ruſſians, as well as Swedes, were drowned. Four ſhips of the line were brought to Cronſtadt; the other two were wrecked where they lay.

In the chaſe of the Swediſh grand fleet, two more ſhips of the line were taken and carried into Revel, with one or two frigates: in one of theſe was the Swediſh rear admiral Leanker, who made a very obſtinate defence againſt two Ruſſian ſhips of the line. Thus were deſtroyed or taken from the Swedes in the courſe of three months, two ſhips at Revel, eight in Wyburg bay, and two more in the chaſe, in all twelve ſhips of from 60 to 70 guns. The relics of the Swediſh navy, thirteen ſail, took refuge in Sweaborg, where, had they gone about five weeks before, they would have remained untouched, and the Ruſſian navy idly paraded the gulph of Finland.

The Ruſſians took, beſides, from ſix to ſeven thouſand Swedes priſoners, of whom I have ſpoken in another place, with conſiderable quantities of naval ſtores.

The

The Swediſh flotilla lying near Fredrickſham and the mouth of the river Thymen was followed, ſo ſoon as Prince Naſſau had repaired the damages of his veſſels, by the Ruſſian light frigates, galleys and gun-boats.

The Ruſſian flotilla lay at anchor at no great diſtance from the Swedes, whoſe galley-fleet lay behind two iſlands; the main channel between the iſlands, and narrower ones upon the oppoſite ſides, being defended by chains of gun-boats and by ſeveral batteries.

The Ruſſian fleet was much ſuperior in force; and the ſignal for attack being given by Prince Naſſau from his frigate the Catharine, about eight o'clock in the morning of the 28th of June, the whole proceeded with alacrity to battle, the wind blowing them down directly upon the enemy. The Swediſh firſt line of battle conſiſted of four frigates and three xebecs. Their gun-boats were ranged behind, and upon the right and left, beſides thoſe which guarded the narrow

narrow channels. The Ruſſian line oppoſed to the Swedes conſiſted of four frigates and three xebecs, with one floating battery. The reſt of the Ruſſian galleys and gun-boats, amounting to 60 or 70 ſail, moſt unaccountably retreated at the very commencement of the action; and, during the period it laſted, remained at a convenient diſtance, diſregarding the orders of Prince Naſſau.

The wind had increaſed to a briſk gale. The Ruſſians in the gun-boats had never before ſeen the ocean, and could not manage their oars, or perhaps this new and ſtrange ſituation might ſtrike many of them with a panic. It is not on board the gun-boats and galleys, as on board the larger veſſels, which may be brought into action without much exertion of the crews: two or three awkward rowers will put a galley or gun-boat in a dangerous ſituation, if the ſea is running high. When the Ruſſians have only to ſtand fire, to load and to diſcharge their guns, no fault will ever be found with them

them in action: but they are not at all acquainted with the arts of ſeamanſhip, nor can it be expected.

The action this day was between four Ruſſian frigates, commanded by the Engliſh officers Denniſon, Marſhall, Young and Perry, and the three xebecs, and a floating battery, commanded by Ruſſian officers, againſt the whole Swediſh fleet. Both the hoſtile ſquadrons lay abreaſt of each other at anchor, and continued for ten hours warmly engaged. The Swediſh commander, now the ambaſſador from the Court of Stockholm at Peterſburgh, ſeeing he could ſpare a part of his force, detached about fifty gun-boats through the narrow channels, with the gallant deſign of ſurrounding the ſuperior fleet of the Ruſſian galleys and gun-boats which remained inactive. The Ruſſian galleys and gun-boats, though they kept at a cowardly diſtance from the fire of the enemy's frigates, inſtantly attacked their gun-boats, and drove them back. This done, they remained as before, without even attempting

attempting to ſecond their brave countrymen, who, while each ſhip had another of equal force to contend with of the Swedes, were beſides raked in all directions by ſurrounding gun-boats.

Many of the Ruſſian galleys and gun-boats were wrecked upon the ſhore adjoining to the narrow channels to which they had gone to the attack of the enemy's gun-boats, or driven through by the wind, or loſt by the awkwardneſs of the crews. Several of the crews from the wrecked gun-boats and galleys, getting aſhore upon the iſlands with what brandy they had ſaved with themſelves, employed their time in drinking and ſinging while the battle was raging in other quarters.

The Ruſſian frigates and xebecs maintained the moſt bloody and obſtinate engagement upon record. Captain Denniſon repeatedly ſent an officer to Prince Naſſau, to inform him of the certain conſequences of the action againſt the Ruſſian arms, if the galleys and gun-boats did not come down

to ſupport this ſquadron. About one o'clock captain Denniſon was ſtruck by a grape-ſhot in the head, and mortally wounded. The command of the ſhip devolved upon the firſt lieutenant, Mr. M'Carthy, who, aſſiſted by the Ruſſian colonel Tchetcherin in conducting this bloody ſtuggle, fought the frigate, until they were under the neceſſity, to prevent her ſinking, to run her aſhore. They were attacked on every ſide by gun-boats, and ſuſtained for ſeveral hours the fire of two and three of the Swediſh frigates, after theſe had ſucceeded in defeating, by means of the numerous gun-boats, the other Ruſſian ſhips and xebecs.

Captain Perry yielded after an obſtinate engagement. Captain Young fought his frigate, until his crew wiſely refuſed to obey, and to throw away their lives, without the ſmalleſt hopes of ſucceſs. The crew ran their ſhip on ſhore, and were taken priſoners.

Captain Marſhall, keeping up a fire which aſtoniſhed the Swedes, fought whilſt his ſhip

ſhip was a wreck, and hardly able to ſupport her cannon: even when the main deck was under water, and the frigate lying upon a bank, which alone prevented her from ſinking, the gallant Marſhall thundered in broadſides againſt the enemy. He was wounded in the thighs and in the knee, around which he had wrapped the ſhip's enſign. He ſtood upon the quarter deck, leaning upon the arm of his lieutenant. While all hopes of victory were over, and not a gun above water, the ſhip ready to go to pieces with every wave, a ſhot cut him in two, and he fell upon the deck, covered with the ſea which broke over it. The colours ſtill remained flying. The Ruſſian prieſt called together the few left of the ſhip's company: he comforted them under their diſtreſs, and held the croſs to them all, which they devoutly kiſſed. The ſhip ſeparated, the prieſt held up the croſs, kiſſed it, and went to the bottom, claſping it in his hands. Several of the crew hung upon pieces of the wreck, and even in this ſituation

tion ſome were killed by the enemy's ſhot, but which was not directed at them.

One boat, the only one which remained with captain Denniſon's frigate, was diſpatched to the relief of theſe heroes. Eight men and two officers were picked up. They were ſaved from one kind of death to meet another; and on coming on board the frigate, now fighting almoſt ſingly againſt the Swediſh fleet, they were placed at the guns, and bore their part in a battle of ſome hours. The Maria, at laſt, nearly in the ſame ſituation with the late captain Marſhall's ſhip, was run on ſhore about half paſt nine in the evening; the officers and men having ſupported, with unparalleled bravery, an unequal conteſt from nine or ten o'clock in the morning. The three xebecs had been taken before this; the bravery of the Ruſſian officers who commanded them would have yielded only to ſuch ſuperior force.

Prince Naſſau, ſeeing the battle at an end, is ſaid to have hid his face with his cloak. The galleys and gun-boats had by this time entirely

entirely gone away; nor did the Swedes attempt to purſue the greater number of enemies who ran from them.

Thus ended the naval campaign in the Baltic. Prince Naſſau meant again to attack the Swedes, and had been joined by ſome frigates for the purpoſe. A courier arrived at the galley-fleet with the news of the peace, and prevented his intention being put into execution.

The Swedes took about 2000 priſoners of the Ruſſians in the late battle, from the frigates captured, and from the galleys and gun-boats run on ſhore. Prince Naſſau is a very unfortunate, as he is a very brave officer. Admiral Tchitchigow is attended by the Goddeſs of Fortune for his pilot: he, too, is a brave and gallant officer; the opinions with regard to his ſkill are various.

The Ruſſians by this ſucceſsful campaign have eſtabliſhed a paramount power over the Baltic. The Swedes cannot again raiſe their heads for a century. It would be in vain for them to build ſhips of the line

line for the Ruſſians to capture. The ſuperiority of the Ruſſian fleet in numbers, if well conducted, muſt be at all times an overmatch for the former.

The Ruſſian fleets returned to port, the armies were diſperſed. And this is the end of war: Having been at much expence and trouble in cutting each other's throats, a form of peace is drawn up, and each nation congratulate themſelves upon their victories.

When will this farce of murder be at an end? When will men turn wiſe enough to check the ambition of princes, but without deſtroying the happieſt ſyſtem of government, which has a good King at its head?

LETTER LIV.

War threatened between Ruſſia and Great Britain.—Folly of War, and Advantages of Peace and Commercial Intercourſe between theſe Empires.—Impolicy of ſuffering Dantzic to be enſlaved by Pruſſia.

Peterſburgh, December 1791.

IT was to be expected that the concluſion of peace between Ruſſia and Sweden would be followed at no great diſtance by peace between the courts of Peterſburgh and Conſtantinople. This has been effected by the mediation of Great Britain and Pruſſia. It is to be lamented that they did not interfere ſooner. A friendly mediation of theſe great powers would have brought about ſo deſirable an object long ago. There

remains

remains not a doubt but that the king of Sweden would have gladly embraced any reaſonable terms of accommodation with Ruſſia, in the end of the year 1788, and that the Turks would, with equal willingneſs, have accepted the terms of peace which Ruſſia offered in 1789, ſoon after the taking of Oczakow. Nay, the King of Sweden and the Grand Sultan, as well as the Empreſs, actually made advances at thoſe periods to this end; and as Ruſſia has not varied from her firſt offer to her enemies, it is plain who were to blame in preventing a treaty of negotiation.

In conſidering this ſubject, and to eſcape the ridicule of politicians, it is neceſſary to omit any reaſoning or argument which the cauſe of humanity might ſuggeſt. I muſt only conſider what increaſe of commerce did Britain purpoſe to herſelf, and what additional territory did Pruſſia, by fomenting this war?

From what I have already ſtated in my former letters, it will appear, to every

impartial man; that Britain and Ruſſia ought more naturally to be friends than any other two nations upon earth. The firſt cauſe of difference between them originated with the Ruſſians, who, in taking the lead in the armed neutrality, planned by Frederick the Great of Pruſſia, acted ungratefully towards Great Britain, and imprudently towards herſelf.—Let it be granted that Ruſſia, and Ruſſia alone, was the prop and inſtigator of this remarkable aſſociation: it muſt be granted, at the ſame time, that the Ruſſian productions are of the greateſt benefit to the ommerce of Britain.

That it became the dignity of our empire to reſent the conduct of Ruſſia, whatever might be the conſequence, no Briton will deny. But, did Ruſſia offer no reparation? Ruſſia offered to renew the ancient treaties of friendſhip and commerce that had, from the commencement of her being a commercial ſtate, ſubſiſted between us. Britain demanded that Ruſſia ſhould publicly diſavow her conduct in reſpect to the

the armed neutrality. Was it not moſt ſatisfactory to the offended dignity of Britain, that Ruſſia, ſenſible of her late error, ſhould come forward to meet her upon former friendly terms? Or was our nation to be better ſatisfied, if Ruſſia humbled herſelf to a degree of meanneſs, by diſavowing her public acts? Was it inconſiſtent with our dignity to accept of ſome apology conſiſtent with the dignity of Ruſſia, an empire eſteeming itſelf as great, and equally jealous of its dignity, as Britain?

Perhaps we did right, notwithſtanding the friendly diſpoſition of Ruſſia, to convince her, by ſome ſtep becoming our dignity, how dangerous it was, as well for her glory as for her intereſt, to offend us. Our miniſters, in refuſing every aid to Ruſſia which ſhe had been accuſtomed to receive from us, did nobly; and to this ſtep, as much as to the unfortunate campaign of Joſeph II. may be attributed the deſire of Ruſſia and Auſtria for peace in the ſummer of 1789. Since that time, Ruſſia had made friendly overtures to Britain, and Britain had beſides

retaliated upon her ſufficiently. What more was requiſite to be done in vindication of our honour? To proſecute Ruſſia any further was a purſuit of fooliſh vengeance, and injurious to the intereſts of our commerce. Allowing that another nation could be found, of equal extent, and producing the ſame commodities as Ruſſia, and in every circumſtance equally advantageous to our trade; yet to throw off our connection with Ruſſia, or to pick quarrels with her, would be improper: and, however wiſe it may be for us to encourage an intercourſe with other countries producing the ſame articles, in whatever quantity, in order to keep ourſelves as independent of Ruſſia as we can; it is certainly madneſs to irritate the Ruſſians, and to poiſon one of the chief ſprings of our commerce.

It is true that Ruſſia depends as much upon our demand, as we do upon her produce; but this is no argument why we ſhould be at variance. I think it rather argues that we ſhould be friends. It will be difficult to find another nation poſſeſſing the ſame natural

natural advantages to our commerce as Ruſſia. Our miniſters are endeavouring to place Poland in competition with Ruſſia. The ſcheme is a good one; but are they aware that their other ſcheme of getting Dantzic for Pruſſia will knock the firſt plan on the head? If miniſters could effect a revolution in Pruſſia, and give her a conſtitution, modelled after our own, Dantzic would flouriſh under the Pruſſian, or any government if it is a free one. If Pruſſia underſtood her own intereſts ſhe would be contented with her preſent advantages, and reap a greater revenue than ſhe now does, by lowering the duties ſhe puts upon the trade of Poland paſſing to Dantzic. Dantzic muſt be ſet at liberty, and relieved from the grievous inſulting burthens upon foreigners trading with this mart, as well as upon the Dantzickers themſelves. It may be urged, Why might not Dantzic flouriſh under the Pruſſian, as well as Peterſburgh under the Ruſſian government? The anſwer is ſimple: The Ruſſian monarchs have been as diſtinguiſhed for their encouragement, their ſtrict obſervance of commercial laws, their

favour and patronage to trade and traders, as the Pruſſian kings have been for a conduct the reverſe. The Ruſſian government has eſtabliſhed its credit with the whole mercantile world, by its invariable adherence to juſtice and equity in all commercial laws and regulations. Frederick the Great was an Arabian ſhiek, who, at the head of a banditti, plundered the Poliſh caravans in their way to Dantzic and other ports.—Should Poland obtain a regular and free government, by the only method theſe can be obtained, under an hereditary line of ſovereigns, her agriculture will proſper; and Pruſſia has but to leſſen her impoſitions upon Poliſh produce, and to withdraw altogether her claims to Dantzic, in order to give foreigners greater confidence than they now have in truſting their property there, and to derive every benefit which ſhe has any right to expect from the produce of countries, and from the trade of a city not her own.

Britain, ſhould Pruſſia liſten to reaſon, will find a greater quantity of naval ſtores than formerly at the ports of Dantzic, Elbing,

bing, Koningſberg, and Memel. Nor can Ruſſia be hurt by this increaſed rivalſhip: it will in the end ſerve her, by creating a freſh ſpirit of induſtry. Poland can never produce one tenth part of the naval ſtores needed by the powers of Europe, nor in ſuch variety as Ruſſia. Ruſſia muſt, beſides, always underſell Poland in the prices of her commodities, as theſe have not to paſs through Pruſſia in their way to Peterſburgh, Riga, and Wyburg.

I was always at a loſs to conceive what the warlike preparations of Great Britain and Pruſſia meant; and inclined to think that they had a reference, ultimately, not to Turkey, but Poland. Her Imperial Majeſty had ſacrificed every thing to obtain a peace, notwithſtanding ſhe was the victor, and Turkey lying at her feet. Pruſſia, depending much upon Poland, no doubt wiſhed to ſeparate her from Ruſſian influence; and perhaps, by countenancing a revolution, or at leaſt by joining that party inimical to the Court of Peterſburgh, ſhe expected a return of favour in having Dantzic ceded to her. Ruſſia has

60,000 land forces, lately engaged in the Swediſh war, at liberty to act in any quarter: Pruſſia diverted her attention from Poland, where ſuch a formidable army might counteract the intended revolution, and frowned upon Livonia with a ſuperior body of troops; and Britain, effectually to tie up the hands of Ruſſia, prepared a fleet.

It is idle to pretend that theſe armaments were intended to oblige Ruſſia to give up Oczakow, and to prevent her from having the command of the Nieper, without ſuppoſing that both the cabinets of Berlin and London are totally ignorant of their reſpective intereſts. Would the Court of Berlin contend that the navigation of the Nieſter be free to Poland, to facilitate the exportation of Poliſh produce by other channels than through the Pruſſian rivers? Would the Court of London endeavour to have naval ſtores brought to the Black ſea, rather than to Dantzic and Memel, for exportation in Britiſh veſſels? What advantage could be derived from having to bring naval ſtores from a greater diſtance than at preſent? Nor is it poſſible that our Court can be ſo

defective

defective in political knowledge, as to have the leaſt objections to the Ruſſians having the free navigation, or even the command of the Nieper. Four Ruſſian ports in the Baltic are traded to by one thouſand ſail of Britiſh veſſels, which make upon an average two voyages in the year. Ten thouſand Britiſh ſeamen are employed on board theſe veſſels. Now what harm is to be apprehended from Ruſſia, were ſhe to open one hundred ports upon the Black ſea, and give employment thereby to ſome thouſands more of Britiſh ſhips and ſeamen? But, ſays the ſagacious politician, Ruſſia might learn to have ſhipping of her own, and rival ours. Grant that this conſequence was to follow (and it cannot happen until Ruſſia greatly increaſes in population and agriculture), yet Ruſſia, without the art of magic, could not rival us ſo far as to divide the freightage of their own trade in reſpect of ſhipping in leſs than one or two hundred years; and at this period, upon the natural idea that commerce will increaſe with population and agriculture, we ſhall

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ſtill have an equal number employed, though the trade is divided, viz. five hundred to the Baltic, and five hundred to the Black ſea.

Ruſſia, labouring under many diſadvantages, can never rival the ſhipping of Britain; and, at any rate, Britons might behold without envy ſo natural a ſtruggle to participate with us in the wealth of their own country! We are rivalled by the ſhipping of other countries in freightage to every quarter of the globe. Ruſſia, if at all, could with difficulty, after many years, arrive at the power of dividing her own commerce.

Turn this ſubject in every point of view, it plainly appears that the war with Turkey was not the cauſe of our preſent interference, but to ſeparate Poland from Ruſſia, and to obtain ſome conceſſions to the Court of Berlin.

The revolution of Poland, happen when it will, or the ſtruggle for ruling its politics, has coſt the lives of 200,000 Swedes, Ruſſians, Turks and Germans. Whether the ſtability of this revolution will ſave an equal

number

number of lives in its progreſs and continuance, is a doubtful queſtion. All kingdoms and empires, equally ambitious, complain of each other's ambition. The powers inimical to Auſtria and Ruſſia fomented the Turkiſh war, and encouraged Sweden to aſſiſt the Turks in order to render the conteſt more bloody, and thereby more diſtreſſing to the two Imperial ambitious Courts. While this political proceſs was going on, Poland offered a convenient field to complete the ſcheme of humbling thoſe mighty potentates. The peace with Sweden rendered an armament neceſſary, and to have a guard at that poſt which Guſtavus had deſerted. Thus it is plain that a conteſt for political influence in Europe was the cauſe of the war with Turkey, and of the armaments of Britain and Pruſſia; not to obtain additional increaſe of commerce, or of wealth. When are theſe conteſts to end? When is the balance of power to be eſtabliſhed? Mankind are butchered one year to obtain peace for the ſucceeding year. They are again called forth to be ſlaughtered upon account of

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ſome ſmall hinge, or part of the weights of this balance being loſt. Again and again men are called upon to put to right with their blood, every alteration in the poſition of this political balance. It is uſed to keep mankind equally miſerable, not equally happy. Scales covered with blood will ſurely never meaſure out happineſs! The cabinets of princes have too long been the ſhambles of butchers, and this balance uſed there to weigh out the blood of the ſubjects. Princes ought now to take warning: *Their ſport is death to us.* While I am firmly convinced that mankind will proſper beſt under one chief, to prevent the ſtruggle for pre eminence in numbers; to preſerve order; and to imitate, on earth, the government of Heaven itſelf; I am ſatisfied, too, that as we cannot have a God for our king, he ſhould be contented to rule by laws made by repreſentatives choſen freely and equally by the whole body of the people. That a repreſentative ſhould not have it in his power to betray the people, it is neceſſary that the people have the power to diſmiſs him;

him; and that the body of the people may not have it in their power to act capriciouſly, a repreſentative ſhall continue to act for a certain time. To ſave the trouble of electing repreſentatives whom the people approve of, every member of national aſſemblies or parliament ſhould continue to act, until the people who have elected him declare their wiſh for his reſignation at the concluſion of that fixed period.

To recur to our diſputes with Ruſſia: the ingratitude of that Court has been mentioned as an excuſe for our taking a ſide againſt her. Were our miniſters ſerious? I am at a loſs to gueſs what is meant by the gratitude of nations. Is gratitude a word to be found in political dictionaries? Is there a court, is there a miniſter exiſting who is not grateful, or ungrateful, as it may beſt ſuit their preſent purpoſes of intereſt, or of ambition? Nothing but mutual aſſiſtance and advantages ever did, or ever will unite nations. Does not our miniſter in that political ſyſtem, of which he is the ſun, find a proportionate degree of returns of

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ſenators, the planets of this ſyſtem, according to the degree of warmth which he beſtows upon them? Do not ſome who are diſappointed in this expected heat, directly get out of the ſphere of his attraction? If miniſters find ſuch difficulty in engaging men, even in the ſervice of their own country, without making it for their individual intereſt to do ſo, why ſhould they affect ſo much ſurpriſe to find that one nation proves ungrateful to another? Ruſſia found an opportunity of ſhewing her conſequence: gratitude ſtood in the way; and the Ruſſian miniſter puſhed it aſide. How nearly do our miniſters copy this falſe example! They have ſeized an opportunity of retaliation; the commercial intereſts of Great Britain ſtood in the way, and they too were puſhed aſide.

During the conteſt of Ruſſia with Turkey, we paid the Ruſſians one third more money for her productions than we did immediately before the war. Was not this an annual drain to the pockets of the conſumers in Britain? This evil will not ceaſe with the war.

Ruſſia

Ruſſia has laid additional duties upon exports to ſupport the war, and which will remain to pay the debts contracted by the war, long after it has ceaſed: and as theſe duties are principally paid by Britiſh importers, we ſhall actually be obliged to pay to Ruſſia a conſiderable ſhare of her war expences. Beſides, the greater the loſſes that Ruſſia ſuſtains by war, the fewer hands will remain for the purpoſes of agriculture; the quantities of her commodities at market will be leſſened, and the prices increaſed. If miniſters cannot point out another country from which we can be ſupplied at the old or eaſier terms, at leaſt until Ruſſia has recovered from her diſtreſſes, was it not imprudent in our miniſters to have been acceſſary to them?

Ruſſia is the only country at this moment in the world that can ſupply us with the quantity which we want of naval ſtores, and no other can ſupply us, even with the ſmalleſt quantities, upon the ſame beneficial terms which Ruſſia has always done, and

ſtill does. Ruſſia neither ſends us her produce nor carries away our manufactures with her own veſſels. We have the whole buſineſs in our own hands, while the trade with other nations, as Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, is more than divided with us; and their ſhips, beſides, rival ours in freightage to all quarters. Our trade with Ruſſia is attended with various other advantages. She is far behind us in manufactures: ſhe ſends her produce in a raw ſtate to be manufactured by us, and takes them back again, paying us five, and one thouſand *per cent.* above what they coſt us in the original purchaſe.

I have conſidered this ſubject, without looking upon the ground of humanity.—The ear of ambition, and of cruel policy, hears not the ſhrieks of the murdered in battle, or of the family of the peaſant who is torn from their embrace to the work of death. Their eyes do not behold harveſts laid waſte, villages in flames. That miniſter, bold in language, vigorous in his meaſures,

meaſures, were he placed but for one day in the front of hoſtile armies, might ſhrink at the calamities which his intrigues bring down upon his fellow creatures.

LETTER LV.

Finniſh Peaſants.—Ruſſian Poſt Houſes.—Houſes.—Livonia.—Livonians.—Ruſſian Troops.

Livonia, February 1791.

I LEFT Peterſburgh a few days ago in my way to Pruſſia, at one of whoſe ſea-ports I mean to embark for Old England. The harbours of Muſcovy are yet frozen up.—I muſt deſcend the globe ſome degrees of latitude, before I meet with an open ſea. The Neva, and the gulph of Finland as far as the eye could reach, was a field of ice, and the ground and foreſts covered with ſnow.

I was fortunate enough to meet with a Livonian gentleman, an officer in the Ruſſian ſervice, juſt ſetting off for Narva. We agreed to travel together. We began our journey in the evening, and, flying over frozen lands and rivers, we had performed

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the beſt part of it by two o'clock the enſuing morning. I had not an opportunity before to obſerve the early induſtry of the Finlanders. They were at this time coming out of their huts, and through their ſmall windows we could perceive the females at work, to which they were lighted by a piece of burning timber ſtuck in the wall. This is a common, yet very dangerous practice in thoſe countries, where the houſes are all of timber. Candles are never uſed by the peaſantry, unleſs upon extraordinary occaſions. The faithful dog is the houſehold god of the peaſants in all countries: we hear his bark as we approach the villages, giving warning, to his maſter, of vagrant travellers. We enter the poſthouſes as we arrive, and are always uſhered into the warm room prepared for travellers at the expence of government. The night was very cold, and the major treated me with a glaſs of brandy and a bit of brown bread from his ſtores. Every traveller carries his proviſions along with him, from the prince in gold lace to the boor in ſtraw

ſhoes. The poſt-houſes do not afford much accommodation; as it is not required. Few travellers ſtop but for horſes.

The poſt-houſes are ſituated at about twelve miles diſtance from each other, and each has a room appropriated for the reception of travellers gratis. Here, the weary wanderer, in cold weather, places his back againſt the ſtove, lights his pipe, unties his wallet, and refreſhes himſelf with bread and cheeſe. I went to ſee how the poſtillions paſſed their time—They were all aſleep upon the top of the ſtoves, and naked. The heat of their bed-room was unſufferable. The poor fellow whoſe turn it was to drive our ſledge was awaked by a blow upon his naked hip—he ſtarted—ſighed and ſcratched himſelf. He was ſoon dreſſed in his ſheep-ſkin, and came out from a warmth of at leaſt 20 degrees of Reaumur, to the open air of nearly as many degrees of cold. It was ſeveral minutes before he could reconcile himſelf to his change of ſituation: he ſoon forgot his warm cabin, turned cheerful, and, whipping his horſes to a gallop,

lop, made the woods echo with his ſongs. In journeying through Eſthonia, the eye is agreeably relieved with alternate landſcapes of cultivation and farm-houſes, of woodlands and rivers. But the country is generally level. A dead ſilence reigns: no roaring cataract from a mountain's brow: the water ſleeps in its even channel. This province has evidently been gained from the ſea. The land ſeems deſerving of more careful huſbandmen. Rural cultivators wholly neglect the formation of incloſures, which might be made of the ſtones that incumber the ground.

At day-break we arrived at Yamburgh, and, paſſing the river ſtill firmly frozen, ſoon reached the poſt-houſe in the ſuburbs of Narva. Here we had our coffee, and my companion left me, to purſue a different route from mine. Our acquaintance had only commenced the day preceding, yet I felt myſelf melancholy upon his departure. He was cheerful and polite, and anxious to be ſerviceable to me though a foreigner. In the poſt-houſe was another young officer,

who, underſtanding that I was going towards Riga, aſked me to take a ſeat in his ſledge a part of the way. This gentleman preſented a different character. He at once betrayed a mean diſpoſition. Said he, "The ſledge being mine, it is proper that you pay for two horſes, I ſhall pay for the other." The captain, to give me a high idea of his power, told me that he would conduct me through Narva without being under the neceſſity of ſhewing my paſſport. He was one of the officers of the garriſon. The ſentinel at the guard-houſe, as uſual, demanded paſſports—the captain ſent his name to the officer upon guard, and we were allowed to proceed. This ſhews how matters may be done even in the midſt of an hoſtile garriſon in time of war, if one officer is not faithful to his truſt. But I believe the captain would not have ventured to have conducted me, had he not ſeen my paſſport.—Vanity, not treachery, was the motive of his conduct. From Narva to Riga, the road leads by the lake Pypus and the city of Dorpat in the province of Livonia. The firſt day's journey from

Riga

Riga preſented a flat country, partly cleared and partly covered with foreſts; the whole as yet powdered with ſnow. Now begin the German poſt-houſes, or poſt-houſes kept by Germans, where one generally finds at twelve o'clock at noon the family at dinner, and where I as generally ſit down and partake. My fellow-traveller, the captain, with his ſledge and ſervant, went on a poſt farther.

A German poſt-houſe and the family within are curioſities. All buildings of German conſtruction are made as nearly ſquare as poſſible, no doubt to render the fabric more durable. The outſide is ſimply plaſtered, without further ornament. The rooms at firſt ſight announce, as it were, their alliance to the houſe, and are all ſquare. The floors are covered with ſand and fir-*leaves*, which, being ſwept every morning, and a freſh ſupply of ſand and fir-leaves being ſtrewed, ſerves inſtead of waſhing the floor—an operation never performed. The ſtove is built of brick, and *elegantly* covered with black tyles. The figure of it is ſquare. The windows too are ſquare, and the win-

dow

dow frames, by their great breadth, ingeniouſly contrived to ſave the expence of glaſs, though they may prevent the ingreſs of light. The poſt-maſter is dreſſed, as all Germans are when at home, in his gown, night-cap and ſlippers: a little dog plays at his foot, and a long pipe depends from his mouth. His wife and daughters are dreſſed in cloth gowns and petticoats, which, like the floor-dreſſing, ſave the expence of waſhing, and the trouble of cleanlineſs. Were they dreſſed in gauze, it would be better adapted to the hot air in which they breathe.

At this poſt-houſe, where I ſtaid all night, early in the morning, I was awaked by a company of travellers. They conſiſted of a Coſſac colonel, his lady, family, and retinue. I dreſſed myſelf, and entered the travellers' room, where they were at breakfaſt. The colonel's eldeſt boy aſked me where I had come from, where I was going, what was my profeſſion—Was I in the Ruſſian ſervice—was I a German, or a Frenchman, or a Ruſſian?—He had never heard any thing

of

of England. The colonel ſmiled, nor did he check the ſprightlineſs of his child. The Coſſacs ſpeak a language differing very little from the Ruſſian—You know they were originally from Poland.

The poſt-houſes provide travellers with carriages to the next poſt-houſe. I again proceeded forward upon my journey. The lake Pypus ſoon appeared before me, a frozen plain of ice. I was carried in the ſledge, acroſs a part of this inland ſea; and arriving at Nennal poſt-houſe, I found my companion the captain, who to the trade of war adds the more lucrative one of brandy-merchant. He has a conſiderable eſtate in Livonia, and has a quantity of liquors, manufactured from the grain of his farms, juſt landed at Nennal, brought hither in ſledges, upon the way to Narva, and no doubt to Revel and Peterſburgh. I took a ſecond farewell of my economical, induſtrious ſoldier and brandy-merchant. The Ruſſian army of ſeventy thouſand men are juſt now quartered in Livonia; were a ſmall party detached to Nennal, they might carry away

away a comfortable draught for the whole of the troops. I again purſue my journey upon the lake Pypus. It begins to burſt its icy chains. There are cracks in many places. A vaſt number of ſledges paſs me, loaded with hay, proviſions, and other commodities.

Surrounded by an icy ſea, frozen lands, and bleak ſkies, I feel hungry, and have untied my wallet, and drawn the cork from my bottle. I am eating a ſlice of cold ham, and drinking your health in rum. It is not the faſhion in this country to adulterate liquors with water. At night I arrive at the city of Dorpat, very ſnugly ſituated in a ditch.

Dorpat is not far diſtant from the lake Pypus. I deſcended into a plain from a riſing ground near this city; from the plain I deſcended into the hollow cavity upon both ſides of which Dorpat ſtands; and upon the other ſide the plain continues. Livonia is a flat country; yet the land preſents often a gently ſwelling ſurface, though it never riſes into hills. The lake Pypus gives

birth

birth to ſeveral rivers, which take their courſe through, and fertilize the province, as well as afford convenient communication with the ſea-ports.

Dorpat appears to be a ſmall town, and ſeems very irregularly built. It conſiſts of wooden and brick houſes. As it was growing dark when I entered, you muſt be contented with this deſcription. I lodged at the poſt-houſe, and in the morning continued my journey, but in a new manner. The ground in this lower latitude is no longer covered with ſnow to ſuch a thickneſs as to render travelling in ſledges practicable. The motion of a wheel carriage has a ſtrange effect upon the body, after having been accuſtomed to ſlide along upon a hurdle.

The Livonians reſemble ſo many prieſts: their clothes are generally of a black colour: they likewiſe ſhave; but in other reſpects they appear to be the ſame people with the Finlanders. They are not however ſo polite as the Fins—I ſeldom noticed them lifting their hats, either to one another, or to travellers upon the road. They are a ſoft-looking

looking harmleſs generation, and, I have learned, are much depreſſed by their lords, to whom they are no other than ſlaves. Livonia upon this ſide Dorpat is leſs crowded with woods than it is adjoining to the lake Pypus. This part of the country however bears no marks either of that wonderful fertility or cultivation which are ſaid to prevail in the inland parts of it. The incloſures are few, and wretchedly executed; the farm-houſes mean-looking, and the farm-yards ill ſtored with ricks of grain. As I drew near to Wolmar, the woods again ſpread over this province, and I remarked that the trees were of a larger ſize as I increaſed my diſtance from the pole. It ſurpriſes me that the northern nations ſhould have ever paid any worſhip to the ſun, ſince they derive ſo ſmall benefit from this *deity*. At Wolmar, a ſmall town, I found colonel Fanſhaw's regiment in quarters. The roads are filled with troops, and every village is a camp. I had the honour to convey a recruit from his native hut to Wolmar —He had yet his native dreſs. His wife, a young

young girl, ſat upon the baggage cart, which ſhe drove—the wheels of the baggage cart broke, and the lady ſhrieked and tumbled—the recruit ran to her aſſiſtance—my charioteer, who was brother to the recruit, begged that I would have patience to wait until the baggage cart was repaired. The recruit quickly ſet matters to rights with a nail and a rope, and he again ſeated himſelf beſide his brother. I am thus aiding and abetting Her Imperial Majeſty againſt the Pruſſians. I muſt paſs through Pruſſia, and hope that none will inform the Pruſſian monarch of my having been an active agent for his enemies. Theſe two great powers are frowning at each other. The ſmall province of Courland alone divides them.

The nearer I approached Riga, the multitude of ſoldiers increaſed. The night drew her curtain before I had ended this day's journey. I paſſed a river upon a raft of trees, in the dark. The poſt-houſe, where I ſtopped for the evening, was upon the oppoſite banks, and Riga within fifteen miles. I found Riga fortified with new lines of circumvallation,

cumvallation, which muſt have been done at a vaſt expence. The deſert plain around affording little elſe than ſand; the turf, of which the lines or ramparts are compoſed, muſt have been brought from a conſiderable diſtance. The extent of theſe lines will require at leaſt ten thouſand men to defend them.

LETTER LVI.

Of the Ruſſians.—Of the Germans, the Beauty of their Women.—Maſquerade at Riga.—Of the German Muſic.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Germans.—Of the River Dwina, and Harbour of Riga.

Riga, February 1791.

WHEREVER I travel, my firſt inquiries relate to the cuſtoms, manners, and amuſements of the people; by which alone their real characters are to be eſtimated. Man, driven by neceſſity, rather than by choice, to divers profeſſions of life, cannot fairly be drawn while covered with theſe maſques: but, in his amuſements, he is naked, and a good painter has no difficulty in delineating his figure.

I ſee a few Ruſſians, and a few only, in

the ſtreets, walking about in their ſheep-ſkins and long beards. They are ſtrangers in this new corner of their empire. They are only beginning to pitch their tents upon the ſhores of the Baltic. Peter I. drove them out of their woods, to breathe the ſea air upon the coaſts of the Finland and Livonian Gulphs. The Germans are generally deſcribed as a grave, phlegmatic people; but, reverſing the order of animal nature, they revive in the cold ſeaſon of the year. The Livonian gentry are now in town, and the aſſemblage of beauty and elegance is far beyond what I expected to meet with here. Perhaps there is no town in Europe of its ſize, that contains ſo many handſome women as Riga. I noticed, however, with regret, that rouge formed a component part of their beauty. The Germans are fond of pomp, and there are few among them who do not live fully to the extent of their incomes. I have been at a maſquerade ball. I went in the morning to procure a ticket. "But you muſt have two," ſaid the retailer of theſe pleaſure-permits, "or you

cannot

cannot ſup." To eat, is a principal part of a German as well as of an Engliſh entertainment. So this but coſt me another dollar. My eagerneſs to ſee a polite aſſembly in this corner of the world brought me an hour too ſoon. This, however, gave me an opportunity of ſurveying the company as they entered—thoſe who came to laugh, or to be laughed at. The great people, as uſual, played at cards; and the jocund and gay danced, and went about diſtributing their jeſts among the ſober dominos—nuns and wanton widows, old maids and coquettes, harlequins, Dutch ſkippers, and ballad ſingers.—There goes a Polander, followed by a Pruſſian, a Muſcovite, and an Auſtrian, at all of whom he ſquints with a watchful eye. There is a ſmart Ruſſian girl, playing at hazard with a couple of Turks. There is one attempting to be a wit, and another to act the fool. Here is a fortune-teller; a young beau with a long beard—O *fortunate puer*! he has got hold of the hand of the prettieſt girl in the aſſembly. I do not well underſtand German; he cer-

tainly tells her to be virtuous, and that every good thing will follow of courſe.

The ſignal for ſupper is thrown out from the gallery—Tranſparent letters inform the company, that thoſe who have tickets for the firſt courſe may file off to the right. The German muſic enchants me. It would be imprudent in the moſt rigid Platoniſt to dance at a German ball, where the eye and the ear are both ſo raviſhed, where ſuch ſweet ſounds from the orcheſtra give new pleaſure to the ſight of lovely females, and both to thought. There were preſent at this maſquerade ſome of the firſt rank; and ſtars and ribbons, the maſques of a court, were ſported in different corners of the rooms.

The public aſſemblies are frequent, and conducted by an aſſociation of the gentlemen of Riga. But in every private houſe through Germany there is, during the continuance of ice and ſnow, a dance or a concert, three or four times a week.—Every German, male or female, can perform upon ſome muſical inſtrument or other: and

wherever

wherever they meet, they inſtinctively look around them in ſearch of a violin, a flute, or piano-forte. The maſter of the feaſt, if there be any ſtranger in his houſe, makes him an offer of his beſt violin, and is thunderſtruck if the gueſt is ignorant of *fa la mi*. A German is ſeldom without a fiddle or a pipe in his hand. He haſtes from buſy ſcenes to his family at home, undreſſes, and, wrapping himſelf up in his night-cap and night-gown, ſeizes his pipe, and ſits down, like a demi-god, in a cloud of his own raiſing. If he is again called out, it is with evident chagrin that he parts with his tobacco and ſlippers: he is, at this time, uncommonly ſlow in his motions; but when he returns to his chamber, his wig and coat are off in a twinkling, and his night-cap reſumed. With all this, he is very polite, and the night-cap is pulled off to every viſitor. But the viſitor ſometimes does not perceive this mark of civility, as the night-cap is frequently hid in the ſmoke. An univerſal civility, indeed, eſ-

pecially to the ladies, whom no gentleman paſſes, known or unknown, without ſaluting them, prevails throughout the whole of this country.

Several Britiſh ſhips are in the river, taking in cargoes of timber, flax, and hemp, for London and other ports. The river Dwina affordsa ſafe and noble harbour for ſhipping; but, like moſt rivers, it has a dangerous bar at its mouth; and its banks, formed entirely of looſe ſand, are ſupported, near Riga, by a ſort of baſket work of bruſh wood. There is no proper foundation for building ſtone piers—the current would ſoon undermine every ſuch erection. With all theſe inconveniencies, Riga is in commerce and in wealth the firſt port of the Baltic.

Yet Riga is not a large town. I think the inhabitants are calculated at twelve thouſand; four fifths of whom are Germans; the remainder Engliſh, Swedes, French, and other nations. The ſuburbs contain nearly as many more inhabitants,

and

and their number daily increaſes with Ruſſians in ſearch of commerce. It is the reſort too, in winter, of the Livonian nobles and gentlemen; and at this ſeaſon there is a very genteel and agreeable ſociety. Count Vietinghoff has built a handſome theatre and aſſembly-rooms, at his own expence. He is the patron, too, of the rural arts, and has ſeveral farms for the improvement of agriculture. This nobleman is deſervedly beloved by all, and in high eſtimation with her Imperial Majeſty, in whoſe councils he holds an exalted rank.

Count Brown, an Iriſhman, governor general of Riga, Revel, and Narva, and of the provinces of Eſthonia and Livonia, entered at a very early period into the Ruſſian ſervice, in which he has now turned grey. The count has undergone every hardſhip of war. Upwards of fifty years ago, in the war with Turkey, he was taken priſoner, and ſold among the Turks for a ſlave. He was redeemed at the interference of the French Ambaſſador at the Ottoman court. Catharine II. at her ac-

ceſſion to the throne, found many Britons in both her army and navy: ſhe continued to them the favour and diſtinction which they had uniformly received from the reign of Alexis Michaelowitz, father of Peter the Great, and placed them in the moſt important ſtations. Ruſſia, prior to the reign of Alexis, had little intercourſe with the reſt of Europe; indeed it was then almoſt entirely an Aſiatic ſtate. Novogorod, an inland city, and not far diſtant from Riga, upon the frontiers of the Muſcovite empire, roſe, from its peculiarly happy ſituation, and in ſpite of the ignorance of deſpotiſm, at an early period to be ranked among the Hanſe-towns. It was the medium, not only of the Ruſſian, but of the Indian commerce. Its wealth and greatneſs were proverbial—"Nought can be greater than God and Novogorod!"

To this mart merchants came in crowds from every corner of Europe. The revolutions occaſioned by the conteſts of the Ruſſian Princes who diſputed for empire, as well as the diſcovery of the paſſage to India

dia by the cape of Good Hope, overturned Novogorod; and the conqueſt of Carelia, Ingria, and Livonia, in the preſent century, by the Ruſſians, completed its deſtruction, by affording more convenient commercial towns at the mouths of the Neva and the Dwina.

Archangel, lying upon the White Sea, had long before belonged to Ruſſia. It was only a mean fiſhing village; and, hemmed in by the frozen North Sea, ſeemed to forbid every attempt to hold a commercial intercourſe with foreign nations. The Ruſſians, without any knowledge of navigation, never thought of Archangel. In the reign of Elizabeth of England, and of John II. of Ruſſia, a ſmall ſquadron was fitted out by the Engliſh government, under the command of commodore Willoughby, to make diſcoveries to the north. The commodore's ſhip, with every perſon on board, periſhed in thoſe inclement latitudes: one only of the ſquadron, after combating with dreadful ſtorms, was driven by chance into the bay of Archangel. The Ruſſians conſidered

ſidered theſe new comers as the natives of another world. Intelligence ſoon reached the Czar John, at Muſcow, who gave orders to have the officers conveyed to him, that he might examine in perſon from what part of the earth or ocean they had come.

Captain Chancellor, the maſter, had with him the commiſſion of his ſovereign, written in different languages. The Czar was ſoon ſatisfied; and, from converſations which paſſed between the Czar and the Engliſh, by the aſſiſtance of foreigners at Muſcow, the idea of commencing a correſpondence directly with England firſt ſtruck the Ruſſian nation. Archangel was yearly from this date frequented by Engliſh ſhips and merchants. John correſponded by letters with our ſovereigns; and, anxious to encourage this firſt dawn of foreign trade, which had never before been carried on directly by the Ruſſians, granted uncommon privileges to his new allies.

The foreign merchants or agents at Novogorod, which ſtill kept up its head, jealous

lous of this new channel of commerce, did every thing in their power to diſſuade the Emperor from ſhewing ſuch countenance to the Engliſh, without effect. Archangel increaſed in trade and wealth. The Ruſſians, proud of this new opening, crowded to Archangel with their commodities; and the Engliſh choſe to bring the Ruſſian produce from this port, however dangerous the navigation, rather than ſubmit to pay the higher prices put upon them by the factors at Novogorod, and other Hanſe-towns, who monopolized the Ruſſian as well as moſt other trades. Thus, the firſt dawn of our connection with Ruſſia daily ſpreading; both nations, ſenſible of its importance, with equal alertneſs and willingneſs entered into treaties of friendſhip. England found in Ruſſia a connection which rapidly bore her up to a ſuperiority over the Hanſe-towns, who were not only great in trade, but in naval power.—Ruſſia afforded the moſt favourite articles to Britons—the materials for rendering their navy formidable to all the world. Alexis, the

ſucceſſor

ſucceſſor of Ivan, father of Peter I. continued that friendly intercourſe begun by Elizabeth and Ivan II. Charles I. correſponded with Alexis. This familiar intercourſe gave riſe to a ſincere perſonal attachment, ſo ſeldom found among kings! After the death of the unfortunate Charles, a number of Scots emigrated to Ruſſia; and hence a number of Scottiſh ſurnames are found among the higher ranks of the Ruſſians, at this day. Theſe refugees entered chiefly into the army, and greatly contributed, by their knowledge both of commercial and military affairs, to the aggrandizement of the empire that had afforded them an aſylum. It is probable that they gave Alexis the firſt idea of aſſerting his claims to the provinces upon the Baltic. It is not to be ſuppoſed, that a nation juſt beginning a direct intercourſe with foreigners could have a juſt idea of what ſteps were neceſſary to increaſe their commerce. Beſides, the difficulty to be ſurmounted in conquering ſuch valuable provinces from the Swedes, poſſeſſing a well diſciplined army,

army, and a ſtrong fleet—provinces, upon whoſe ſafety the very exiſtence of Sweden depended—could not be ſurmounted, even in idea, but by ſome perſons who, ſenſible of the bleſſings of commerce and the happy ſituation of theſe countries, ſaw that every thing ought to be hazarded by Ruſſia, in procuring what alone could render her a maritime and trading power. Ruſſia had often before had theſe provinces lying at her mercy; but a want of this knowledge of commerce made her indifferent about the dominion over lands in no way ſo fruitful as the vaſt regions ſhe already poſſeſſed.

Even Peter the Great had little knowledge of thoſe machines which make commerce move, and ſupport it. He muſt have this matter clearly explained to him, before he ventured his life and his crown in ſo hazardous an undertaking, in which he had not only to conquer the regular forces of an ancient and brave nation with a mob of peaſantry, but to conquer too a ſtill more formidable barrier, the averſion of ſavage minds to civilization and trade. Peter led

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on a rabble, unwilling to fight, againſt an army of Charles XII. of Sweden, the greateſt hero that ever lived; againſt an army fluſhed with recent victory over their moſt inveterate and powerful enemies, the Danes; an army trembling with contempt at the Ruſſian emperor's attack, and who drove before them 50,000 Muſcovites with 5000 Swediſh troops, at the firſt onſet! Charles XII. committed one fault, which loſt him all his fame, and the beſt part of his kingdom. He deſpiſed his enemies, and expoſed himſelf, upon every occaſion, to fight under every diſadvantage. He had ſeveral foes to contend with, whoſe armies ſeparately were more numerous than his. He imprudently divided his army, to oppoſe them ſeparately, and at a great diſtance from each other. The conſequences which happened, were naturally to be expected. Charles XII., had he kept his brave Swedes together, would have gained all the victories he did gain; and, without being at laſt defeated, he would have preſerved his kingdom, and made poſterity venerate his name.

One falſe ſtep ruined him. Peter I. built his new capital upon the ruins of Sweden. No wonder that the Swedes continue to behold with the keeneſt anguiſh the decided ſuperiority attained by Ruſſia, erected upon ſuch foundations.

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LETTER LVII.

Extent and Variety of the Ruſſian Empire.—Courland.—Inns in Courland.—Mittau.—Neceſſary Subordinations of Ranks.—Reflections on Liberty and Tyranny.—State of Agriculture in Courland.—Courlanders.—Polanders.—Poliſh Pruſſia.—Memel.

Courland, March 1791.

I BEGAN my journey from Riga through Courland (a country which I have long wiſhed to ſee) laſt Saturday. The Dwina was at this time covered with looſe ice. With much difficulty we effected a paſſage acroſs the river. There are no bridges over the rivers in Livonia. The paſſengers are carried over in ſmall rafts of trees, which are pulled from one ſide to the other by means of a rope fixed to poles ſtuck in the banks.

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The difference of latitude between Peterſburg and Riga is not quite three degrees. The country around the firſt is ſtill covered with ſnow, and the Ruſſians are driving in ſledges upon the gulph of Finland. At Riga the ſnow is melted, and the Dwina will be open for commerce in a few days. But this variation of climate in the Ruſſian empire is hardly worth remarking, in compariſon to what is experienced between more diſtant parts of it. It would be curious at this moment to view the face of nature and the employment of the Ruſſians at Peterſburgh in 60 degrees, and of the Ruſſians in 44 degrees. This wonderful empire is an epitome of the whole world; an extenſive collection of deſerts, oceans, rivers, hot and cold climates, barren and fruitful countries, where even the hardy pine-tree juſt exiſts upon the Finland ſhores, and where the mulberry flouriſhes, and feeds the ſilk-worm, upon the borders of the Caſpian.

I imagined that, in my former letters, I had given you a long and particular account of Ruſſia and Ruſſians. I find now that I

am only entered upon the ſubject; and you muſt conſider every thing I have yet written, as only an introduction to the accounts which I had promiſed. Before I take leave of this ſubject for this time, I will aſſure you that the accounts of the Ruſſians contained in theſe letters are drawn from actual obſervations, and muſt neceſſarily contain ſomething new of this celebrated nation. Moſt of our travellers have been diſpoſed to abuſe this people; and, indeed, at firſt ſight one is apt to feel a prejudice againſt them. A reſidence of ſome years is therefore more requiſite to judge of an uncivilized, than of a civilized nation; for the ſame reaſon that it requires a longer attention to judge of the value of a diamond out of the mine, than of one out of the hands of the lapidary.

For the purpoſe of reviewing Courland to the beſt advantage, I have altered my mode of travelling. For although I poſted along only in the day through Livonia, and halted where any object occurred worthy of obſervation, yet I paſſed too quickly to take a proper ſurvey of any other object than

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the face of nature; which alone can be obſerved in ſuch journies, unleſs the traveller ſojourns for months or years. My new carriage is a Pruſſian waggon drawn by ſix horſes that would not diſgrace the ſtate-coach of an emperor. The communication is yet open between Ruſſia and Pruſſia, and this waggon, with ſeveral others, had conveyed various commodities from Koningsberg to Riga.

The frontiers of Ruſſia extend a few miles beyond the ſouth banks of the Dwina, where we entered Courland. It was dark when the waggoner told me that the frontier-gate was at hand, and that I muſt come before the Ruſſian officer to ſhew my paſſport. This I inſtantly complied with. The officer had a ſmall houſe cloſe to the gate, where ſtood a ſentinel, and, no doubt, ſome military conſtables were at hand to enforce obedience to the regulations preſcribed to itinerants. The officer entered my name and paſſport in his book. He aſked if I had any Ruſſian money. I ſhewed him ſome Alberts-dollars. The carrying of Ruſſian

coin out of the empire is prohibited. Having ſatisfied him that I had no rubles or copics in my purſe, the gate was opened for me. It is a long pole thrown acroſs the road. A wide-rolling ocean, or a chain of Alps and Apennines ſhould divide kingdoms and empires. A pole of timber acroſs a road is a poor barrier againſt the ambition of princes.

We arrived at the firſt ſtage in Courland at a late hour. The waggoners do not ſtop at the poſt-houſes. There are inferior public-houſes for thoſe who have not the honour to be drawn by poſt-horſes. We entered, with the waggons and cattle, at the gavel of the houſe. A large gate admits not only human travellers, but their dapples and baggage, under a hoſpitable roof. One half of the houſe is the ſtable; the other, divided from it by partitions, is the tavern. Here a long room, with tables and forms of the ſame length, accommodates the lower orders of the people. The humble pedeſtrian unties his wallet, and eats his black bread and ſalt; and making a bed of his baggage, if he has any, upon the floor, repoſes himſelf for the night.

night. He pays nothing for houſe-room; perhaps a glaſs of thick beer from the landlord encroaches upon his purſe one farthing. Not ſo the rich waggoner. The long table is loaded with ſmoking viands, oppoſite to the place where he is ſeated; the porkers bleed; and the company might be miſtaken for Penelope's ſuitors.

Beyond the long-room is a ſmaller one furniſhed with tables, chairs and beds: but to this elegant place none except quality reſort; that is, any perſon who has money to pay for, and is luxurious enough to require, a comfortable ſleep. The landlady did me the honour to uſher me into it. This room being ſeldom occupied is ſeldom heated. The landlady ſeemed to think that the diſtinguiſhed honour of ſleeping in it would compenſate for the cold damp air which ſeized me at my entrance. I returned inſtinctively, and ſeated myſelf by the maſter waggoner; thus preſerving heat and conſequence together.

I again ſeat myſelf in my waggon, on a bundle of ſtraw. The carriers diſplay their

whips; the horſes move forward; and their bells, ſounding on their necks, ſalute the morning. We arrive within ſight of Mittau, the capital, ſituated upon a plain, and upon the banks of a ſmall river. We are ferried acroſs this river by means of a raft, and landed nearly at the ducal palace, which ſtands upon a ſmall eminence without the city. It was Sunday, and the inhabitants were picking their way through dirty ſtreets to church. They ſpeak the German language, and are, no doubt, *ab origine* Germans. The metropolis of Courland has nothing to diſtinguiſh it but the palace, and this palace is in ruins. I was ſurpriſed to ſee Ruſſian ſoldiers here: their green uniforms attracted my attention as the features of an old acquaintance. The Duke's ſoldiers are clothed in blue, ſimilar to the uniform of our artillery. They were changing guard at the palace. My curioſity prompted me to follow them; they marched into the ſquare which the palace ſurrounds. This building, which they guard, is habitable in one of its wings; the other affords

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convenience for an Engliſh ſmith's ſhop. The Duke of Courland reſides at a palace in the country, no doubt in better repair.

I left Mittau in diſguſt. I expected to have ſeen ſomething, and was diſappointed. Notwithſtanding the ſeaſon of the year, this province every where ſhows marks of fertility and the higheſt cultivation. The fields are all ſurrounded by ditches, which both ſerve the purpoſe of a hedge, and are a neceſſary drain to ſo flat a ſoil. The young rye crop is already ſhading the plains with green. Courland has an agreeable diverſity of woodland, paſture, and cultivated grounds; and the ſhepherd and the huſbandman have the country nearly divided betwixt them. This delightful province would ſeem not to belong to northern regions: the pine-tree alone diſcovers its native north. Amidſt the ice and ſnow of Scandinavia the ever-verdant pine ſhoots its head above them, as if it were to aſſure the inhabitants that nature is not dead, and that ſpring will again return!

It is a melancholy conſideration that, while I view the fertile boſom of Courland,

I ſee too the laborious peaſant covered with rags, and depreſſed with ill treatment and poverty. I know that the Duke of Courland is oppoſed in plans for the good of the province, by proud and refractory nobles; but as I witneſſed ſome things which muſt have been neglected by the Duke himſelf, matters in which he could not have been counteracted by any perſon, I am inclined to think that the nobility and gentry are not entirely to blame. The poverty of the Finlanders, when one looks at their country, is eaſily accounted for without attributing it to the chains of ſlavery; but in Courland the poverty of the natives inſtantly conveys the idea of tyranny, and places the haughty noble, who does ſo much to inſult mankind, in the moſt odious light. Was this globe created to ſupport a haughty and luxurious few; and were the reſt of mankind created to be their ſlaves, and for the purpoſe of being oppreſſed and hooted at? The God of the univerſe certainly only permits ſuch evils, to promote a greater good, to ſucceed in the due courſe of things. Yet men are not born equal: we inherit from nature differ-

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ent degrees of ability and virtue; and it is to be lamented that the ranks in ſociety are not diſtinguiſhed by ſuch gradations alone. Society cannot exiſt without diſtinction of rank; and ſociety and rank ſhould have a chief, to preſerve order in them. A good king is the repreſentative of the Deity upon earth. He ought to govern by the laws; or, in other words, he is under the law. When a king has not the power of acting contrary to the law, his people enjoy liberty, becauſe the laws by which they are governed are, in civilized countries, made by the voice of the people. Uncivilized nations cannot have this liberty, becauſe to make laws ſuppoſes the makers to poſſeſs wiſdom and reaſon. Uncivilized nations are to be governed by the laws of the ſovereign and his counſellors, who are ſuppoſed to copy them from the laws of happier countries. The abuſe of this power in the ſovereign and his counſellors, is tyranny; as it is likewiſe, when they endeavour to retain it longer than is requiſite, or when the civilization of the people takes place, from intercourſe

with civilized countries, and enables them to conſtitute laws for themſelves. Tyranny, therefore, does not imply the having a chief or king; nor liberty, to be without one. The people who permit the abuſe of laws are their own tyrants.

The ſituation of the Courland peaſant is truly lamentable; not becauſe he is a ſlave, but becauſe he is neither fed nor clothed, amidſt that plenty with which Heaven has bleſſed his native plains.

The improved ſtate of cultivation in Courland is owing to the introduction of German farmers; ſome of whom have farms upon their own accounts, but in general are employed by the proprietors of the land, who prefer farming their eſtates, and do not permit their peaſants, as is the practice in Ruſſia, to be their tenantry. Theſe being unſkilful in the art of agriculture are of ſmall ſervice to themſelves or to their lords. The Courland peaſants are employed, by the farmers or by the proprietors, as labouring hinds, having a ſmall portion of land for themſelves, beſides the pittance of

wages they ſometimes receive from the farmers, who ſtipulate for the ſlaves in the ſame manner as for the farm. The peaſants belong to the lands, whether theſe are ſold or let. The produce of Courland finds a ready market at Riga, Windaw, and Libaw. The two latter are ſea-ports upon the coaſt of this province. I have ſtopped to ſurvey the different proviſion-markets at Riga; and one day expreſſing my aſtoniſhment that Livonia ſhould pour ſuch variety and ſuch plenty into the town, the venders ſhook their heads—"Ah," ſaid they, "it is not "from Livonia we are ſupplied, it is from "Courland: we ſhould neither have provi- "ſions in plenty, nor good in quality, nor "cheap, *unleſs we had Courland!*" This was their expreſſion. Livonia is certainly not ſo much, if at all, inferior to Courland in point of ſoil and climate: the different management of the lands occaſions the finer appearance and the greater fertility of the latter. This points out to the Livonian landholders an eaſy way to increaſe their revenues. Unfortunate it is, indeed, that the

the conduct of the Courland gentry affords not an example, at the ſame time, of humanity to the peaſants; whoſe ſituation is not bettered by the larger crops and revenues derived from the eſtates.

In all my journey through Courland I ſee very few gentlemen's ſeats. The farm-houſes are numerous; and the varied land-ſcapes of wood-land and cultivated ground, in many parts ſwelling into ſmall hills, afford the moſt delightful entertainment to the admirers of nature. In ſhort, I am in love with this paradiſe; and, were it the land of freedom, I ſhould wiſh to pitch my tent ſomewhere near the ſea-ſhore of Courland for life. For, however greatly I admire rural beauties, I wiſh to have, from my rural abode, a proſpect of the ocean: purling ſtreams, and cataracts, and lakes do not ſatisfy me; they are, at beſt, miniature figures.

Our caravan arrived upon the banks of the river Windaw. Here I noticed a number of carts loaded with grain and other commodities, going to the ſea-ports. Among theſe were ſome from Riga loaded with

caviar

caviar and other Ruſſian articles for Memel and Koningſberg: they were attended by a Ruſſian factor, or *chargé d'affaires*. I conſidered him as an acquaintance, and we converſed upon the buſineſs he was engaged in. I aſked this gentleman to let me have a little of the caviar; but he would not break upon a caſk, leſt the whole ſhould have been ſpoiled in obliging me. I have formerly ſaid, that a Ruſſian is willing to oblige, even when he expects no reward; but the lower ranks ſeldom venture any hazardous attempt to ſerve one, if more money is to be loſt than made by it. We were ferried acroſs the rivers in our way, as uſual, upon rafts. The day was ſtormy when we paſſed the river Windaw. The rafts were not drawn from one ſide to the other by a rope fixed to poles in the oppoſite banks, but puſhed along with poles. The ropes are, no doubt, diſuſed, as they might interrupt the navigation of the river by lighters to and from Windaw with articles of commerce.

The Courlanders appear to be the ſame people

people with the Livonians, both in cuſtoms and language, as far as my ſhort acquaintance with them enabled me to judge. Depreſſion and poverty are diſtinguiſhable in their faces and dreſs. Whether it be owing to ſtupidity or haughtineſs, I do not know, but I obſerved that neither the Livonians nor Courlanders lifted their hats to ſtrangers or to each other, as is common among the Finland nations.

The Germans form in Courland, as in Eſthonia and Livonia, the middling ranks of the people, between the peaſant and the lord of the ſoil. They are the merchants, handicrafts, ſhop-keepers, and farmers. A few Jews endeavour likewiſe to pick up a little money in Courland. I ſaw ſeveral at Mittau; and yeſterday one ſolitary child of Iſrael paſſed me in the woods. He had no ſhoes to his feet, but very probably a good ſum of money in his pocket. Ruſſia is not infeſted with this race of money-worms: the great cities of Poland and Denmark, including Norway, are filled with them. The Ruſſians are themſelves Jews in every

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thing regarding money: the Iſraelites probably found nothing to be gained among them.

We arrived at a country town near Libaw. Before we entered Libaw, we paſſed the end of a lake, only ſeparated from the Baltic by a ſand-bank. A great part of this lake appeared covered with ſwans, and it is of ſeveral miles in length. I never before ſaw ſuch a numerous collection of birds together. They made the air ring with their croaking—a ſtrange ſalute to the northern ſpring, which has commenced in Courland! A few days ſince I left Peterſburgh and the ſurrounding ſeas and lands frozen and covered with ſnow; the thaw met me near Riga, where it had opened the Dwina. In Courland no fragments of winter remain. Spring hailed me as I paſſed the barrier-gate dividing Ruſſia from this province. Were I to continue my journey with quick expedition down the globe to the line, I ſhould meet with all the ſeaſons in the courſe of a few weeks.

Libaw is the principal ſea-port of Courland. Here is an excellent harbour. The channel

channel between the Baltic and the lake forms it. The exports from Libaw are the produce of Courland, grain and timber. The firſt article is generally taken by Hollanders and Lubeckers. Few Britiſh ſhips come here. The neighbouring port of Memel in Pruſſia affords a greater variety and quantity of commodities of trade, and conſequently is chiefly frequented by Britiſh veſſels. I found, however, two Britiſh veſſels here, taking in timber, grain, flax, flaxſeed, &c. I went on board; and, making ſome enquiries, I found they were loaded from the warehouſes of an Engliſh merchant, the only one in Libaw. I waited upon this gentleman. He was with his family at dinner. I accepted of his invitation, and dined with them. We had a concert in the evening, in which Mr. King, our entertainer, played the flute, and His Pruſſian Majeſty's conſul, Monſ. Zimmermann, the firſt fiddle. Several of the German gentlemen, the principal inhabitants of the town, likewiſe performed upon the violin, and the lovely Mrs. King upon the piano forte.

forte. At ſuch concerts the entertainer ſeldom engages any profeſſional muſicians; his gueſts, if they are Germans, are all muſicians.

Derwindaw, not far diſtant from Libaw, and to the northward, is the other principal port of Courland, and from which the ſame articles of commerce, already noticed, are exported. Libaw is a pretty large town, but chiefly conſiſts of wooden houſes, of one, and never more than two, ſtories in height. The inhabitants are all Germans. The native Courlanders are not yet arrived to the honour of being citizens. They labour for that crop which employs the German ſettlers in exporting or in working into different manufactures.

The road from Libaw to Memel is ſimply the ſea ſhore of the Baltic. I have ſeated myſelf upon the top of the waggon, to enjoy the ſea air, and the extenſive and grand proſpect around me. The ſun has exhaled the miſt which hung over the ocean, and diſcovered the ſhips of various nations ſteering for different harbours. They muſt not

yet attempt a paſſage up the gulph of Finland farther than Revel upon the Ruſſian, and Sweaborg or Helſingfors upon the Swediſh ſide. The eagerneſs of avarice will not, however, wait for the diſſolving of ice, and many veſſels are loſt in navigating the Baltic at too early a ſeaſon. The luxurious in Peterſburgh ſometimes give a very high price for foreign proviſions, when theſe turn ſcarce in winter: lemons, oranges, and other luxuries, at ſuch times, are brought to Revel, and carried by land to the Ruſſian metropolis, and even from the Courland and Pruſſian ſea-ports. The expence of land carriage is not high, and facilitates trade all the year.

The waggons move very ſlowly along the ſandy beach. I walk by the rolling ſurge, and collect peebles and amber. The tavern where we ſtop, is built upon a bank of ſand cloſe upon the ocean. I forgot to mention to you that I have two fellow-travellers in the waggon. They are two Romans who have been diſpoſing of ſome little articles in Ruſſia, Courland, and Germa-

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ny: they have ventured further than all the force of antient Rome ever dared, and with the aſſiſtance of no other weapons than pins, buckles, ſciſſars, razors, and muſlin handkerchiefs. So much for the arts of peace. I have the honour to carve at this hotel *ſur mer* for my two companions. We talk German together, and they have recorded to me their adventures at Pleſkow, Mittaw, Libaw, and other places.

We entered Poland not far from this hotel. The Poles were fiſhing among the ſurge for ſhrimps with ſmall nets. There is a national character appears at firſt ſight. The Poles have a near reſemblance to the Coſſacs: tall and handſome in their perſons, of a ſwarthy complexion. They ſhave their heads, leaving only the hair upon the crown. They are reſpectful in their demeanour, but have at the ſame time a majeſtic deportment. *Every Pole looks like a gentleman in diſtreſs.* I have ſeen them formerly, and the ſame idea always ſtrikes me. Their dreſs likewiſe reſembles the Coſſac: a looſe coat, wide hanging ſleeves, and a ſort of trowſer breeches.

The dreſs of the women is very antique, bearing a ſimilarity to the Ruſſian, and as fine and richly ornamented with gold-lace as poſſible. The landlady of the houſe at the town of Polengen, where we arrived in the evening, was decorated in all her moveable wealth. Her head was wholly covered with an embroidered napkin; and other parts of her dreſs were ſo rich and tawdry, that one might have miſtaken her for our Lady of Loretto.

Polengen is famous for the amber collected near it, and which conſtitutes an article of commerce. The town is ſmall, or rather it is a very inconſiderable village, though it has the honour to bear the name of the country it belongs to. Polengen, or Pologne, is ſituated near the ſea-ſhore. Leaving this, we ſoon enter into Pruſſia. The country around is flat and ſandy: ſeveral villages are ſcattered about, and ſome appearance of cultivation. The bulk of the inhabitants of theſe villages are of Lithuanian origin, a poor-looking people, not differing much in viſage and dreſs from the

Courlanders. A long piece of timber ſtuck in the plain, gave us notice of our entering Poliſh Pruſſia.

A conſiderable proportion of this latter kingdom bears ſtill the original names of the countries from whom they were wreſted. The kingdom of Pruſſia is made up of provinces from every adjoining kingdom. The Pruſſian, the Ruſſian, and the Auſtrian eagles have torn with their claws empires in pieces. Pruſſia has however generouſly enough left Poland in poſſeſſion of a ſtripe of land, two or three miles in breadth, reaching to the Baltic ſea. The Poles have at leaſt a ſight of that ocean, which formerly waſhed and rolled upon their ſhores!

Diſtreſſed Poland muſt depend entirely upon the mercy of her powerful plunderers. Theſe three powers affect to be her tutors; but they have robbed their wards: and I ſuſpect their contentions relate rather to the farther diviſion of the property, than to the education of the children.

We had no ſooner paſſed this wooden diviſion of empires, than a Pruſſian huſſar

trotted towards us, from a neighbouring village. He inquired what we were? whence we had come? We were three French merchants travelling to Berlin. The huſſar, judging the moſt favourably of us, ſtroked his muſtachios, and went away to give a report to his officers, who were walking upon the heath.

The ſpires of Memel appear before us. The high ſandy banks interrupt the view of Memel. The veſſels in the river ſeem buried betwixt the banks of ſand; the river itſelf not being ſeen until you are cloſe upon it. Memel is a very great commercial port: it is of no conſideration in any other reſpect. Poland gives it timber, flax, grain, and various commodities for exportation. The rafts of baulks, and lighters with other articles of trade, are daily arriving from the interior parts of Poland. Even at this early ſeaſon, there are in the river fifty ſail of Britiſh ſhips. The buzz of ſeamen, and the crowd of people joſtling each other upon the ſtreets, declare the commercial conſequence of Memel.

Memel

Memel is likewiſe at preſent crowded with troops. I obſerve a regiment in green and white uniforms. The Pruſſian uniforms are blue. This new uniform, reſembling the Ruſſian, muſt be intended for particular purpoſes.

LETTER LVIII.

The Hiſtory of Poland.

Memel, April 1792.

SINCE my laſt, I have made ſeveral excurſions in this neighbourhood. It is a fine country, equally fitted for the purſuits of agriculture and commerce. The Pruſſians appear clearly to have views of ſtill farther conqueſts on this coaſt. It is aſtoniſhing that the European powers ſhould ſit ſtill, as if they were unconcerned ſpectators of the partitioning plans of Auſtria, Pruſſia, and Ruſſia! If the Pruſſians are not checked in their career, they may extend their maritime domain from Dantzic to Lubec.

The kingdom of Poland verging towards its final diſſolution—for the authority of the crown is now rather nominal than real, and

and powers merely nominal do not long ſurvive their independence—the kingdom of Poland, at the preſent moment, naturally calls back our attention to the viciſſitudes of its hiſtory and government.

Poland in the changes it has recently undergone, and in the ſituation in which it now appears, preſents an intereſting ſubject of enquiry to the philoſopher and the politician. About a century ago, it was one of the moſt reſpectable powers in Europe. It now preſerves little more than a nominal exiſtence, as an independent nation. During the courſe of the preſent century it has exhibited an almoſt uninterrupted ſcene of diſorder and calamity. Sometimes overrun and pillaged by foreign enemies, and generally diſtracted by internal diſſenſions, peace and ſecurity and ſettled government have been almoſt unknown. Kings have been raiſed to the throne, and precipitated from it. Conſtitutions have been eſtabliſhed, and altered, and overthrown, and renewed. Some of its fineſt provinces have been diſmembered; and foreign armies

eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed in the republic, either to perpetuate its miſeries, or to complete its ſubjugation.

The ſituation of the country exhibits the moſt ſtriking impreſſions of theſe convulſions. The principles of diſorder, long ago incorporated into the frame of the conſtitution, have been matured and perfected by the habits of party diſſenſion, heightened by religious animoſity, and fomented by the inſidious policy of the neighbouring ſtates. Law and juſtice have been ſilenced by the ſtrife of faction, or overwhelmed by the preſſure of foreign force. The people, reduced to the loweſt ſtate of degradation and oppreſſion, have no intereſt in the meaſures of government, and no incitement to induſtry. The practice of ſelling the crown to the higheſt bidder has introduced an almoſt univerſal venality among the nobility. Amidſt the violence of faction, honour and principle have been ſwept away; and, while almoſt every nation of Europe has been advancing in improvement and civilization, Poland appears to have been long ſtationary;

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if it has not rather returned in a contrary progreſs.

It would require both greater abilities and more leiſure than fall to my ſhare, to trace the operation of the various cauſes which have concurred to produce theſe remarkable effects. As, however, the ſubject is intereſting, and as it may tend to give you a more diſtinct idea of the ſituation of the country, I ſhall endeavour to give you a ſhort view of the principal circumſtances which have deprived the republic of Poland of its wonted energy, and reduced it to the ſtate of weakneſs in which it appears at the period of which I propoſe to give you ſome account.

The nature of the Poliſh government is certainly the great ſource from which the misfortunes of this country have taken their riſe. In ſupport of this opinion, I begin with an hiſtorical ſketch of the government of Poland, from which you will ſee the weakneſs of the ſtate keeping pace with what the Poles are pleaſed to call the freedom of the conſtitution.

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The firſt part of the hiſtory of Poland, like that of moſt other nations, cannot be conſidered in any other light than as a maſs of fable, illuminated with ſome ſcattered rays of truth. Little, therefore, can be certainly known reſpecting the origin of the Poliſh government. There are, however, ſeveral circumſtances to direct our opinion. The deſcription Tacitus has left us of the tribes from whom the Poles are, moſt probably, deſcended; the analogy of other northern nations, and the general tenor of the Poliſh hiſtory, tend to prove, that the great body of the people enjoyed an high degree of freedom, as well as a conſiderable influence on the meaſures of government. Although the ſovereign power was generally continued in the ſame family, there was no eſtabliſhed rule of hereditary ſucceſſion. If a free election did not take place on every vacancy, the conſent of the nation, expreſſed in a general diet, was always neceſſary to confirm the nomination of a ſucceſſor to the ducal dignity. While the government remained on this footing, the people were

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in fact free; and yet the ſovereign power appears to have been ſubject to no conſtitutional reſtrictions. Neither the prerogatives of the duke, nor the privileges of the people, were defined by poſitive law. Cuſtom ſeems to have formed the only reſtriction to either. The ſovereign carried his power as far as he thought he could depend upon the ſubmiſſion of the nation; and the people ſometimes exerted their right of expelling a tyrannical maſter, and aſſerting their freedom by force.

The government ſubſiſted for a conſiderable time in this undefined ſtate. We are only informed of two attempts, in the courſe of ſome centuries, to introduce a better form of government. But as the Poles were not better acquainted with the ſcience of legiſlation at that time, than their deſcendants appear to have been in later times, the expedients hit upon produced none of the benefits expected from them, and the old government was, in both caſes, ſoon reſtored.

The firſt circumſtance, which tended to operate

operate a permanent influence on the form of the government, and the condition of the people, was the practice of beſtowing fiefs, upon the feudal principles. This inſtitution, ſaid to have been introduced into Poland about the year 820, inveſted the feudal lords with a ſpecies of authority over their vaſſals, which was, eventually, the more fatal, as in the days of ignorance it was not thought neceſſary to define it with much accuracy. The effects of the inſtitution were not immediately felt: and conſequently we may ſafely conclude, that, in a ſtate of ſociety in which men are but little diſpoſed to inveſtigate diſtant conſequences, they were not foreſeen. The inſtitution was therefore allowed gradually to incorporate itſelf into the conſtitution. By the continued exerciſe of command, the nobles proceeded by inſenſible gradations to regard the peaſants under their juriſdiction as their property. The difficulty of reſiſting an authority which, being at firſt but little felt, roſe into abſolute dominion by ſlow acceſſions and diſtant encroachments,

ments, each of which, ſingly conſidered, was of little importance, by degrees broke the ſpirit of the people, and diſpoſed them to unreſerved ſubmiſſion.

I conſider the introduction of Chriſtianity as another event, which, by tending to ſtrengthen the power of the ariſtocracy, concurred to produce the changes which have ſince taken place in the government. The Poles embraced the Chriſtian religion about the year 964, when the ſpiritual tyranny of Europe was at its height; and the deſpotic principles of the Roman catholic church were received along with the Roman catholic faith. The apoſtles of this church, far from imitating the primitive ſimplicity of their predeceſſors, aſſumed in their miſſion a tone of authority ſuitable to the high claims of their temporal head. Formerly, the Romiſh church formed through Europe one vaſt body, whoſe general intereſts were the ſame, in all its members; one ſpirit pervaded and animated the whole. Preſumptuous from the powers they pretended to derive from the author of their religion, and proud

proud from the veneration in which they were held by a ſuperſtitious people, they naturally coaleſced with thoſe who aſpired to hold the reins of government. Artful and intriguing, they were indefatigable in their endeavours to extend the power of the church; and although from a colluſion of intereſts they might ſometimes find it expedient to cruſh a tyrant, yet the principle of tyranny entered too deeply into their character to allow them to oppoſe uſurpations in which they themſelves had ſo great a ſhare.

No ſooner had they eſtabliſhed themſelves in Poland, than they found themſelves placed in a ſituation highly favourable to their ambitious views. From either the piety or the folly of the kings and nobles, the higher clergy ſoon ſaw themſelves poſſeſſed of ample territories, inveſted with all the privileges of the nobility, and in ſome caſes with a more extenſive authority than any other ſubject could claim. While therefore their territorial juriſdiction gave them the ſame intereſt with the nobility to encroach on the rights of the peaſants, the

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blind veneration attached to their character facilitated their uſurpations. The ſacred phalanx, well trained to ſubordination, ſeconded with all the fervor of holy zeal the views of their leaders: and thus the domineering ſpirit of the Roman catholic hierarchy, concurring with the arbitrary principles of the feudal ſyſtem, gave an eaſy victory to the clergy and nobility over the liberties of the people. While implicit obedience was enforced by the horrors of damnation, as well as by the dread of temporal puniſhment, no effectual oppoſition to the tyranny of the ariſtocracy could be expected.

The people firſt felt the conſequences of theſe inſtitutions, in the extinction of their political privileges. They were excluded from the diet of election; the nobility and clergy reſerving to themſelves the ſole right of regulating the ſucceſſion to the ſovereignty. The abridgement of perſonal liberty quickly followed the loſs of political conſequence. Oppreſſions were multiplied. A variety of vexatious claims

were, from time to time, eſtabliſhed againſt them. They were gradually deprived of the rights of men, as well as of thoſe of citizens. The law was too weak, or too corrupt, to afford them relief; and they ſunk into a ſtate of ſervitude, from which they have never ſince emerged.

Attempts have indeed been made to reſtore them to the protection of law, and the rank of freemen; but theſe attempts have hitherto failed of ſucceſs. Towards the cloſe of the twelfth century, Caſimir the ſecond endeavoured to repreſs the tyranny of the ariſtocracy, and to ſecure the perſons and property of the peaſants: but the influence of his regulations, as it aroſe chiefly from his perſonal character, produced only a tranſitory alleviation of the grievances of the people. The oppreſſions he attempted to remedy aroſe, on the other hand, from cauſes which were permanent, and inherent in the conſtitution. Accordingly, no ſooner had the death of this amiable monarch removed the reſtraint of his authority, than the anarchy and violence of the ariſtocracy

broke

broke out with renewed fury. The pride of the moſt turbulent of the nobility was offended by this attempt to ſet bounds to their uſurpations; and this circumſtance, joined to the uncertain ideas entertained concerning the right of ſucceſſion to the ſovereignty, ſplit the nation into factions. Hence aroſe a train of civil wars, which convulſed the ſtate, with only occaſional intervals of tranquillity, till towards the middle of the fourteenth century. At this period aroſe Caſimir the Great, to whoſe abilities Poland ſtill conſiders herſelf much indebted. As the reign of this prince forms a remarkable era in the Poliſh annals, allow me to ſketch the leading features of the conſtitution, at his elevation to the throne in 1333.

There were at this period no written laws in Poland. There was no determinate order of ſucceſſion to the crown. The ſovereign, indeed, generally appointed his ſucceſſor, but this appointment was not always reſpected. The nobility always exerciſed the right of confirming their ſove-

reign's nomination, if they did not claim the privilege of a free election. When different competitors appeared, as was often the caſe, the right of the ſtrongeſt was generally found the moſt reaſonable. The prerogatives of the crown were not yet defined: but the king was often obliged to conſult the ſentiments of the nation, before he adopted his meaſures. Caſimir himſelf, though one of the ableſt monarchs that ever held the Poliſh ſceptre, was, on ſeveral occaſions, under the neceſſity of ſubmitting his plans to the diſcuſſion of the national diet. The palatines, or great barons, had acquired an almoſt unlimited juriſdiction in their palatinates, and the inferior gentry had loſt much of their conſequence. The peaſants were reduced to the loweſt ſtate of ſlavery and degradation; their perſons and their property being entirely at the diſpoſal of their maſters. In a word, the conſtitution was changed, from a monarchy controuled by a republican aſſembly, to a monarchy fettered by a turbulent ariſtocracy.

Caſimir

Caſimir became the legiſlator of his country; but he did not attempt to bring back the conſtitution to its original principles. Without attempting to remedy the fundamental errors of the government, he ſatisfied himſelf with regulating the internal police of his kingdom, and correcting a maſs of abuſes, which had been accumulating for ages. He allowed the order of ſucceſſion to the crown to remain in the ſame unſettled ſtate in which he found it: and he made no attempt to fix the diſtinctive limits between the regal and ariſtocratical branches of the conſtitution; each continuing to retain thoſe vague and inconſiſtent pretenſions which can exiſt together only in a ſtate of ſociety in which the principles of government are but little ſtudied, and leſs underſtood. But he endeavoured, by a variety of regulations, to repreſs the licentious and tyrannical ſpirit of the higher nobility, which had already been the ſource of ſo much miſchief. He introduced order and form into the different departments of government: he aboliſhed many abſurd

practices, which cuſtom had ſanctioned, in the courts of juſtice; and in their room he eſtabliſhed a fair and rational mode of deciſion. But, what particularly marks the ſuperiority of his genius, and the juſtneſs of his political views, is the liberal protection which his laws afforded to the inferior orders of the people. He reſtored the peaſants to the protection of the laws, aboliſhed perſonal ſlavery, and prohibited under ſevere penalties the cruel exactions to which the nobles had ſubjected all who had had the misfortune to be born on their eſtates. His humane attention to the intereſts of this unhappy claſs of men led the nobility to diſtinguiſh him, with a miſplaced ridicule, by the title of *king of the peaſants*. Yet this is preciſely the point of view in which his legiſlative abilities appear in their higheſt luſtre. By raiſing the maſs of the people to the rank of freemen, and affording them the protection of equal laws, he gave them an intereſt in the welfare of the ſtate. Had the prudent and benevolent ſpirit of his laws been adhered to, Poland

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muſt have ſtill continued a great and flouriſhing nation. The government, in whatever hands lodged, would have been always able to command the ſervices of an active peaſantry, brave from the conſcious feeling of independence, and attached to their country by the ſtrongeſt of all ties, that of common intereſt.

But after the death of Caſimir, the peaſants were quickly thrown back into that ſtate of miſery and degradation from which he had attempted to raiſe them. The laws enacted in their favour were ſoon either abrogated or forgotten. The ſituation of this claſs of men became even more deplorable and hopeleſs from the attempt that had been made to relieve them. Their maſters ſeem to have taken the hint from this circumſtance, to ſecure their future uſurpations with all the ſolemnity of legal enactment. Pains and penalties without number were, accordingly, denounced againſt all of them who ſhould dare to think themſelves entitled to the common rights of human nature; and their lives and properties

were again ſubjected to the caprices of every gentleman who choſe to indemnify their maſters, or pay a trivial fine as the compenſation for their murder.

In conſequence of this ſyſtem of oppreſſion, equally inhuman and abſurd, the ſtate has in a great meaſure deprived herſelf of the ſervices of the only claſs of men capable of ſupporting her honour, and defending her frontier. The peaſants, ſunk and imbruted by long habits of the moſt abject ſlavery, have loſt that elaſtic vigour, both of mind and body, which is neceſſary to conſtitute a ſoldier. They have hardly the ſhadow of intereſt in the public welfare. Having nothing but bare exiſtence to loſe, they have nothing but mere animal life to defend: and being already as low as it is poſſible to reduce them, they may, when forced to change maſters, be placed in a better ſituation, but cannot be reduced to a worſe. Hence the defence of the ſtate has been left entirely to the nobility; a claſs of men whom habits of licentious independence have rendered totally unfit for ſubmitting

to the neceſſary ſtrictneſs of military ſubordination. Thus the national ſtrength has, of late, become chiefly formidable to the nation itſelf. As an evidence of what I advance, allow me to remind you of the wonderful facility with which Charles the twelfth over-ran Poland, and of the ſtill more ſurpriſing eaſe with which a few Ruſſian regiments overawed this once mighty nation at the election of the preſent king. In theſe and all ſimilar caſes, the peaſants ſtood neuter; and the nobility, purſuing each his ſeparate meaſures, left the whole an eaſy prey.

It would have been happy for the nobility, had they contented themſelves with being the patrons and protectors of a free peaſantry. They would not have had the mortification of ſeeing their country become an appendage of a neighbouring ſtate, and themſelves the neceſſary tools of foreign intrigues. But inſtead of being actuated by that generous ambition which ſtrives to equal thoſe of higher fame, they have generally been guided by a mean and tyrannical pride, which is gratified only by degrading

degrading and trampling on thoſe who are below: and, as this principle is commonly found in connection with raſhneſs and folly, they have, as might have been expected, exceeded their intention, and cruſhed themſelves under the weight of their miſtaken grandeur.

Excuſe the ſeverity of this cenſure; if you do not think with me, that the circumſtances warrant it.

Adieu. You ſhall hear from me again ſoon.

Yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

Memel, April 1792.

DEAR SIR,

IN my laſt letter I gave you a view of the Poliſh government, from the period at which perſonal freedom and ſome ſhow of political importance were enjoyed by the nation at large, to the final extinction of the liberty of the peaſants, conſequent on the death of Caſimir the Great. The changes which have ſince been made in the conſtitution, aſſumed a new direction. The nobles, being now the indiſputed maſters of the lives and fortunes of their peaſants, next turned their attention to retrench the power of the crown.

The royal prerogative was indeed exorbitant, and totally incompatible with the principles of a free government. It accorded however with the irregular ſpirit of feudal times, when the nobility, although

poſſeſſing no conſtitutional check on the power of the crown, could yet overcome the king; and extort from his fears the enjoyment of an independence which was not ſecured to them by any legal conceſſion. But the time was now arrived when this precarious freedom could no longer ſatisfy an high-ſpirited nobility. The nobles determined to hold their privileges, not as matter of favour, but as matter of right: they determined to limit the power of their kings, and to eſtabliſh their own immunities on ſolid conſtitutional grounds.

I go on to trace the moſt remarkable changes which this principle has introduced into the conſtitution. Perhaps on this ſubject I ſhall not be able to give you much information which you may not already have met with. But I flatter myſelf you will not reckon my letters wholly uſeleſs, if they only afford you (which is all I aim at) a concentrated view of circumſtances, in themſelves highly important, and rendered more peculiarly intereſting by the conſequences which have reſulted from them.

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The reformation which Caſimir the Great made in the government, appears to have ſuggeſted to the nobility the idea of abridging the power of the crown. The laws of this prince had been calculated to reſtrain the licentious freedom of the ariſtocracy, and to emancipate the peaſants from the galling yoke which their maſters had impoſed on them. This principle, once admitted, might lay a foundation for much more important alterations. An union of intereſts between the king and the people might enable the king to reduce the independent baron to the humble level of a ſubject, and exalt the ſlave to a participation of the privileges of his maſter. Another circumſtance concurred to confirm their fears. Caſimir's ſucceſſor was a foreigner. He poſſeſſed extenſive hereditary dominions; and might employ his Hungarian army to cruſh the liberties of the Poliſh ſubjects.

The nobles reſolved to prevent theſe dangers, and the occaſion was highly favourable to their deſign. Lewis was in Hungary when his uncle breathed his laſt.

The

The nobles, profiting of his abſence, reſolved to ſtipulate with him for their own privileges, before they would admit him into the kingdom. Accordingly, a deputation of their number waited on him at Buda, and demanded of him a formal renunciation of ſome branches of the prerogative, as the conditions on which they offered to become his ſubjects. The moſt important of theſe terms were, that the king ſhould not impoſe taxes without the conſent of the ſtates; that in the event of his dying without heirs male, the election of his ſucceſſor ſhould be left to the ſtates; and that he ſhould reimburſe to the nation the expences, and even the damages, occaſioned by his wars. Theſe terms were highly reaſonable; Lewis accepted them; and they were from henceforth regarded as fundamental articles of the conſtitution. This is the origin of that contract, termed in Poliſh Latin *Pacta Conventa*, which, with occaſional variations agreeable to the circumſtances of the times, every ſubſequent king has been obliged to ratify previous to his coronation.

The

The idea of a limited monarchy was not yet familiar in Europe; and, it is probable, the nobles were not more fully reſolved to watch over their new privileges, than the king was to diſregard his conceſſions. The point was ſoon brought to iſſue. Lewis impoſed, by his ſole authority, the ordinary land-tax. The nobles remonſtrated; and as the king found it neceſſary to have money at any rate, he conſented to reduce the tax conſiderably, and to purchaſe the quiet enjoyment of the remainder by conſenting, that thoſe who were appointed to fill the principal offices of government ſhould hold their places for life, and by promiſing to exclude all foreigners from his adminiſtration.

You will obſerve, that the attempts of the nobles were hitherto directed rather to reſtrain the activity of the royal prerogative, than to divide the powers of government with the king. The legiſlature was ſtill wholly attached to the crown, though clogged and retarded in its operations by the weight of thoſe reſtrictions which the ariſtocracy had impoſed. Had Lewis joined the abilities of his predeceſſor to his own arbitrary

arbitrary principles, it is probable, the nobles would have derived little benefit from their new privileges. The command of taxation, although now the leading power which communicates motion to the whole machine of government, was of very ſubordinate importance at the period of which I write, when taxable commodities were few; when the revenues of the crown, like thoſe of every feudal baron, were chiefly derived from the royal demeſnes; when armies were raiſed and ſupported on feudal principles, and the ſalaries of the officers of ſtate aroſe from the lands and emoluments unalienably attached to their offices.

But the meaſures of this prince were generally impolitic. Incapable of thoſe enlarged views which take in the cauſes, connections and conſequences of political arrangements, he oppoſed to the ſyſtematic encroachments of the ariſtocracy mere temporary expedients; and, as he neither knew how to reſiſt with dignity, nor to concede with a good grace, his reſiſtance did not procure him the character of firm-

neſs, nor his conceſſion the reputation of moderation. Yet, notwithſtanding the weakneſs of his adminiſtration, and the jealouſy with which the ariſtocracy watched over his meaſures, he was able to diſmember ſeveral provinces at that time dependent on Poland, and to procure the conſent of a diet to elect his ſon-in-law, Sigiſmond marquis of Brandenburg, his ſucceſſor. On the former of theſe acts were founded the pretenſions of Auſtria, at the partition of Poland in 1772: and, conſidering the hereditary rapacity of the houſe of Brandenburg, it may be reckoned an uncommon inſtance of moderation in the Pruſſian monarch, that, at the ſame diſaſtrous period, he did not claim the crown of Poland in conſequence of the latter.

Fortunately, however, for the Poles, Lewis died before Sigiſmond reached Poland. The nobles, agreeably to the terms of their original compact with Lewis, aſſumed the right of election. Sigiſmond's pretenſions were ſet aſide; and the daughter of the late king was placed on the throne,

on condition that ſhe ſhould not marry without the approbation of the ſtates—an article which ſtill continues to be inſerted in the *Pacta Conventa*. The marriage of this princeſs with Ladiſlaus Jaghello, in 1388, added Lithuania, Samogitia, and Ruſſia Nigra to the dominions of Poland, and introduced a new line of kings.

No other conditions but thoſe ſtipulated with Lewis were impoſed upon Ladiſlaus at his elevation to the throne. But in the courſe of his reign the nobles puſhed their claims farther than they had hitherto done; and the character of the king was favourable to their views. Ladiſlaus poſſeſſed great talents both as a general and a ſtateſman, joined to the leſs royal virtues of an honeſt man. Superior himſelf to injuſtice and all the oblique arts of political intrigue, he ſeems not to have ſuſpected them in others, and conſequently to have given too much ſcope to the growing pretenſions of the ariſtocracy. As, by the conditions on which he had obtained the crown, he could not impoſe taxes without the conſent of the

ſtates,

ſtates, he aſſembled the nobles in their different provinces for the purpoſe of obtaining an additional ſubſidy. This was the firſt inſtance of the exerciſe of the right of taxation by the nobility. It was alſo the origin of the dietines, or provincial aſſemblies.

Having now ſucceeded in appropriating to themſelves the right of impoſing taxes, the nobles began to form farther pretenſions. An occaſion ſoon offered of bringing their claims forward. Ladiſlaus wiſhed to ſecure the ſucceſſion to his ſon. The nobles were willing to gratify their monarch in this favourite point, provided he would conſent to grant them ſome new immunities. The firmneſs of the king withſtood their importunity. A tumult, as is uſual on thoſe occaſions, enſued; but Ladiſlaus was not to be overawed by their clamours. His generoſity, however, ſoon afterwards granted to the wiſhes of his people what his firmneſs had refuſed to their demands.

Several of thoſe new regulations, which regarded the qualifications requiſite to the holding of offices in the ſtate, had the me-

rit of utility to recommend them. A deſire to conciliate the affections of his people, with the view of continuing the ſucceſſion in his family, ſeems to be the only principle on which we can account for his agreeing to deprive the crown of the right of coining money without the conſent of the ſtates; and for his granting to the nobility an exemption from arreſt, till after legal conviction of the crime with which they were charged—a privilege which fruſtrates the ends of juſtice, and renders the nobles, in a great meaſure, independent of the laws of their country.

In making theſe conceſſions, Ladiſlaus certainly departed from the ordinary principle of his adminiſtration. His general conduct was founded on higher notions of the prerogatives of kings. Permit me, for the honour of royalty, to mention a ſingle inſtance.

A powerful party in Bohemia, diſguſted with their own king, made a tender of their crown to the Poliſh monarch. "You "are not your king's judges," replied Ladiſlaus;

diſlaus; "he is accountable only to God. "A ſtate can never be happy, unleſs the "legiſlative power be undivided: and, by "attempting to ſeize upon rights which "do not belong to you, you would intro-"duce a confuſion into your government, "infinitely more fatal than the evils you pre-"tend to remedy. I am, therefore, leſs "ſenſibly affected by this mark of your eſ-"teem, than offended at your preſumption, "in propoſing that I ſhould commit an act "of injuſtice ſo contrary to my character."

In one reſpect, the partitioning powers themſelves might, probably, agree in opinion with the Poliſh monarch: but we ſhall not, perhaps, find many kings who would not have reflected on the immediate *advantages* of ſuch an offer, before they had refuſed it on the principle of its *injuſtice*.

The ſuſpicious jealouſy with which the ariſtocracy watched over its new privileges, had almoſt diſappointed the ſon of Ladiſlaus of the ſucceſſion, notwithſtanding the meaſures his father had taken to ſecure it. Ladiſlaus the ſixth was a minor at the death of

his father, and conſequently incapable of ratifying the *Pacta Conventa*. By the addreſs of his party, however, this difficulty was ſurmounted; the principal men among his friends having ſworn to the obſervance of the *Pacta Conventa* in his name, and engaged that he would ratify this contract when he came of age. Such were the precautions which the jealous ſpirit of liberty required. He was crowned with the uſual ſolemnities in 1435.

The reign of this young monarch, which was neither long nor fortunate, is diſtinguiſhed by no material change in the conſtitution. The nobles contented themſelves with conſolidating their ſtrength, and confirming by exerciſe the powers they had already obtained, without preferring any new claim. But in the ſucceeding reign they made ample amends for this moderation. Ladiſlaus the ſixth, juſt as he attained the age of manhood, fell at Varna, fighting in violation of the faith of treaties; and was ſucceeded by his brother Caſimir the fourth, already Great Duke of Lithuania.

The long and unquiet reign of this prince, who governed Poland for near half a century, furniſhed the nobles with various pretences to increaſe their power. Caſimir's injudicious partiality for his Lithuanian ſubjects diſguſted the Poles. The long wars in which he was engaged, exhauſted the treaſury. And although, during the courſe of his reign, the boundaries of the ſtate were extended; and its federative ſtrength increaſed, by the union of the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia in the perſon of his eldeſt ſon; yet theſe circumſtances ſeemed rather to impreſs the nobles with a dread of his power, than with an eſteem for his talents. Indeed, although his military ſucceſs was conſiderable, and his good fortune ſtill more remarkable, he poſſeſſed neither that energy of mind which commands reſpect, nor that condeſcenſion which wins affection. Although he had ſucceeded in uniting the ſovereignty of rival ſtates in his own family, Poland felt her internal ſtrength debilitated and her reſources exhauſted by the ſplendour of her

monarch. Accordingly the nobles eagerly ſeized every occaſion which the king's neceſſities afforded them of farther abridging his power, and eſtabliſhing to themſelves a more general and immediate influence on all the meaſures of government.

The moſt important change in the conſtitution which this reign introduced, was that by which the right of taxation was veſted excluſively in the general diet. In conſequence of this regulation it became neceſſary to give this aſſembly a new and a more convenient form. Previouſly to this period, all who were comprehended in the claſs of nobles, together with a certain number of the inhabitants of the cities, poſſeſſed the right of voting in the general diet. Hence thoſe meetings generally bore a nearer reſemblance to the tumultuouſneſs of a mob, than to the ſolemnity of a great national aſſembly. Too numerous to be comprehended within the limits of any regular forms of procedure, and too much broken by party diſtinctions to be capable of rational diſcuſſion, they could only give, or

refuſe, a general ſanction to the objects that were laid before them: they were totally inadequate to the detail of public buſineſs, and the accuracy of inveſtigation which muſt enter into the proceedings of a legiſlative aſſembly.

To remedy theſe radical defects, the conſtitution of this body was changed: and to prevent the confuſion inſeparable from univerſal ſuffrage, the nobles agreed to wave this right, and to vote by repreſentation. The provincial diets, which from the reign of Ladiſlaus Jaghello had poſſeſſed the right of taxation, each in its own province, were from henceforth deprived of this right, and confined to the election of deputies, or nuncios as they are called, to repreſent the body of electors in the general diet. The great officers of ſtate, the palatines, the caſtellans, the biſhops, and ſenators retained their places in the diet, as being attached to their reſpective dignities.

The general diet, thus conſtituted, has preſerved its form to the preſent times. One material alteration only deſerves to be mentioned.

tioned. The free towns have been deprived of their right to ſend nuncios to this aſſembly. It is unqueſtionable that at the time when the general diet was eſtabliſhed in its preſent form, and during the reigns of all the Jaghello family, the free towns poſſeſſed the right of repreſentation. The firſt attempt to procure their excluſion was made in the reign of Sigiſmond the firſt. But the nobles were at that time unſucceſsful. As ſoon, however, as all ideas of hereditary right to the throne were not only in fact given up, but formally renounced and proſcribed by ſtatute, there was no longer any power to check their uſurpations. The whole authority of the ſtate was at every vacancy actually lodged in their hands, and one of the firſt uſes they made of it was to ſtrip the towns of their right of repreſentation in the general diet.

The general diet, conſtituted on theſe principles, proved highly favourable to the deſigns of the ariſtocracy. By condenſing and concentrating their power, it enabled them to act with unanimity and concert. For-

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merly their meaſures were formed on *the ſpur of the occaſion*, and purſued at intervals, as the preſſure of regal authority produced a general feeling of diſſatisfaction, or the aſcendency of ſome bold ſpirit rouſed the latent deſire of liberty diſperſed over the extent of a large empire. For almoſt all the Poliſh nobles live on their eſtates. They had no rallying point, round which they might aſſemble when the cry of endangered liberty ſummoned them to the defence of their privileges. The alarm was not eaſily propagated; the public voice was collected with difficulty; and it was ſtill more difficult to combine the ſtrength of the order, and direct it towards a ſingle object. Even the provincial diets wanted weight to enforce their remonſtrances. The King could eaſily overawe each of them ſeparately, and triumph by ſucceſſive efforts over a reſiſtance which was only invincible when it was univerſal.

The general diet collected the ſcattered rays of reſiſtance into a focus. It formed a conſtitutional body, neither too unwieldy to be

be actuated by one ſpirit, nor too feeble to want the energy neceſſary to enforce its authority. It was a theatre on which the ambitious might diſplay his talents, the diſcontented might traverſe the public meaſures in revenge of his private wrongs, and the patriot might make the voice of truth be heard and reſpected by the nation.

Accordingly the inſtitution of the general diet ſoon gave a new direction to the views of the ariſtocracy. Previouſly to this æra, the nobles aimed rather at an exemption from grievances than at the poſſeſſion of power. The oppoſition lay rather between the *exertion* of prerogative and the *enjoyment* of independence, than between the actual power of the ſovereign and the claimed power of the nobles. Even the negative which the ariſtocracy enjoyed againſt the king's right of taxation, was rather an expedient to ſave the purſes of the ſubject, than an attempt to appropriate to themſelves one of the branches of the king's prerogative. But from this period the crown and the diet were directly oppoſed to one another.

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Each aimed at a direct aſcendency in the legiſlature; and neither could gain, except in as far as its antagoniſt loſt.

That branch of the legiſlature which was firſt veſted in this aſſembly was becoming gradually more important. As the progreſs of ſociety advanced, the expences of government increaſed, while the hereditary revenues of the crown remained ſtationary. The ſucceſſive improvements in arts and manufactures were gradually enhancing the price of every article of elegance and luxury. Commerce had begun to introduce the valuable productions of foreign artiſts, which could not be purchaſed but at a much higher price than the rude materials of former elegance. Wars were becoming more tedious and obſtinate; and although carried on with leſs ferocity and bloodſhed, they were gradually requiring a much greater command of money. The combination of theſe circumſtances with others of a ſimilar tendency ſoon rendered the right of taxation the moſt important branch of legiſlature. I need not remind you of the uſe which the com-

commons of England have made of this right. In the hands of the Poliſh diet it ſoon became an equally powerful engine. From the difference of ſituation and character between the two nations, it has indeed in England led to the moſt perfect model of a free government which has yet been framed; while in Poland it has conducted to a ſtate of weakneſs, anarchy, and oppreſſion, which has perhaps never been exceeded in the annals of government. But its effects have been equally powerful in both caſes.

Caſimir ſoon felt the weight of that power with which he had inveſted the general diet. His continual neceſſities obliged him to have frequent recourſe to this aſſembly for ſupplies, and every new demand produced a new liſt of grievances. The diet immediately learnt to connect the queſtion of redreſs with the demand of ſupply. The king and the ariſtocracy endeavoured each to make the beſt bargain they could for their reſpective intereſts: and the diſpute was generally carried on with all the wind-

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ing arts and cool deceit which none but underling traders and politicians would condescend to practise.

The greatest part of the grievances complained of during the reign of this monarch regarded the infraction of the existing laws, and therefore deserve not to be noticed here. But the diets gradually pushed their claims beyond the limits of the privileges they had already acquired. They made bold inroads upon the prerogative, and seized the most valuable rights of the crown. The most important concession which they obtained from this monarch, was that by which he obliged himself not to enact laws without the consent of the diet.

Hitherto the legislative power had resided entirely in the king. All the laws were promulgated by his sole authority. Casimir the Great had indeed convoked a general diet in 1347, for the purpose of sanctioning the code of laws he wished to establish. But this was a singular instance. The change which that monarch proposed to introduce was very general. By consulting previous-

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ly the ſentiments of the nation, he wiſhed to procure a more cordial aſſent to an highly beneficial ſyſtem of regulations.—His conduct, in this inſtance, marked the benevolence of his character and the mildneſs of his adminiſtration; but it implied no renunciation of his prerogative. In the occaſional changes, which from this period had been made in the laws, the king had always acted by his ſole authority. The conſent of the ſtates was never ſuppoſed neceſſary to give authority to the emanations of the king's legiſlative power.—The reign of Caſimir IV. is the æra at which the diet eſtabliſhed a conſtitutional right to check the exerciſe of the prerogative of majeſty.

The neceſſities of this prince obliged him alſo to reſign another very important right of the crown—namely, the right of ſummoning the feudal barons to attend his ſtandard at the head of their retainers, whenever he was engaged in hoſtilities with any of his enemies. The nobility, haraſſed by his frequent wars, and greatly diminiſh-

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ed in their number, wiſhed to ſecure themſelves againſt the deſtructive effects of the ambition of their kings. Nothing could be more likely to accompliſh this end, than throwing off their obligations to obey the royal ſummons. Caſimir wiſhed to repleniſh his exhauſted treaſury; and money was to be procured in no other way than by yielding to the claims of the diet. Accordingly the bargain, being thus mutually advantageous, was ſoon concluded, and the feudal ſervices aboliſhed.

Such were the principal changes made upon the government of Poland from the death of Caſimir the Great in 1370, to the death of Caſimir IV. in 1492. You will probably agree with me, that the ariſtocracy had hitherto proceeded with conſiderable moderation; and that the reſtraints they had impoſed on the power of the crown were, upon the whole, reaſonable. To impoſe legal checks upon the exerciſe of thoſe prerogatives which never can be ſafely left to the will of a ſovereign was a glorious attempt. But, while I allow the higheſt praiſe to the principle on which the Poles

proceeded, it muſt at the ſame time be admitted, that they have not been judicious in the means by which they have applied it. It would be difficult to point out any period at which the Poliſh conſtitution was ſo regulated as to have even the appearance of ſtability. In all the ſucceſſive improvements which they have made on the form of their government, the Poles have either exceeded their intention, or have fallen ſhort of it: they either have not ſufficiently ſecured their liberty, or they have thrown off all reſtraint and ſubordination.

We may reckon the eſtabliſhment of general diets in their preſent form to be the æra of the conſtitution. Before this period, every thing was in a ſtate of incoherence and uncertainty. The general diet was intended to be a regular counterpoiſe to the power of the crown, and to introduce order and conſiſtency into the government. But it by no means produced the effects expected from it. The government was ſtill as irregularly balanced as before. The king who, by œconomy, could confine the expences of his government within the hereditary

revenue

revenue of his crown was under no neceſſity of ſummoning the diet; and, conſequently, there was no legal remedy for whatever grievances might exiſt during his reign. On the other hand, the elective nature of the crown threw the whole power of the ſtate at every vacancy into the hands of the ariſtocracy, who might, under the pretence of ſecuring their privileges, impoſe whatever limitations they pleaſed on the ſucceſſor, or even annihilate the ſovereign power.

Although, however, the king might ſometimes acquire a decided preponderancy in the conſtitution, it is obvious that, in the ſtruggle between royalty and ariſtocracy, he had to ſuſtain a very unequal conteſt. There was no hereditary body of men, who, from a ſimilarity of intereſts, were induced to ſupport the dignity of the crown. He was obliged to chooſe his ſervants out of that order whoſe views were directly contrary to his own. In advancing ſuch men to offices of truſt and importance, he often only inveſted them with a greater power of injuring his cauſe: for royal favour is not always

repaid by gratitude. You will obſerve, alſo, that, by the peculiarity of the Poliſh conſtitution, the great officers of the crown have an intereſt directly contrary to that of their maſter. Inſtead of deriving ſtrength and ſupport from the power of the crown, they derive the ſtrength and ſplendour of their offices from the diminution of that power. They are appointed for life, and are by conſequence independent of the king. Their weight in the government increaſes as the royal authority diminiſhes; and as political gratitude is not generally a very active virtue, we may reaſonably preſume that, if they do not really join in humbling their maſter, they will at leaſt not be very ſtrenuous in their endeavours to prevent his depreſſion.

Had it been poſſible for the Poles to prevent all farther innovation, and fix their conſtitution on the principles on which it reſted at the death of Caſimir IV. the crown would have retained ſufficient energy for the purpoſes of regular government, and the ariſtocracy would have poſſeſſed a ſufficient

ficient check upon the royal prerogatives. But the conſtitution was not formed for ſtability. The king was a ſolitary friendleſs power; and the ariſtocracy was turbulent and aſpiring. Of conſequence the principle of change was continually operating, and no expedient could be found to counteract its effect, until the power of the crown was reduced almoſt to nothing, and the nobles left wholly without controul. Adieu.

LETTER LX.

Memel, April 1792.

DEAR SIR,

THE adminiſtration of Batori had impreſſed the nobles with a ſenſe of the neceſſity of order and regularity in the government. The ſpirit of diſcord was for a time laid; public virtue began to raiſe her head; and the good of the ſtate appeared to be the only object of the national exertions. The diet which met at the commencement of the interregnum conducted its deliberations with unanimity; and enacted ſeveral ſalutary laws tending to check that ſpirit of faction and intrigue which had on former elections convulſed the ſtate; to prevent corruption in the electors, by declaring bribery a capital crime; and thus, by removing every motive of private intereſt in the electors, to procure a fair unbiaſſed declaration of the national will. The moſt

moſt flattering hopes were conceived from this auſpicious commencement.

But it ſoon appeared that the principles of diſorder were too deeply rooted, to be ſo eaſily removed. The laws for preventing bribery and faction were entered on the records of the diet, and quietly laid up in the archives of the aſſembly, to ſleep in ſilence. The feeble effort of patriotiſm, which the diet of convocation had made, appeared to have exhauſted the public ſpirit of the nation. It was an exertion to which the Poles had not been accuſtomed; and they reſolved to make themſelves ample amends, in the ſequel of the interregnum, for the reſtraints they had come under at its commencement. Accordingly various factions immediately ſtarted up, whoſe intrigues were carried on with the utmoſt keenneſs and exaſperation. The diet of election at laſt met; and the irritable temper of the electors, inflamed by reciprocal abuſe and animoſity, ſoon hurried them beyond their uſual meaſure of outrage. From mutual inſult they proceeded to open violence;

and, in the ſhock of the contending parties, the booths of the ſenators were burnt to the ground, and many lives loſt on both ſides. Such were the effects of Poliſh liberty!

You will naturally ſuppoſe that factions, whoſe animoſity had given birth to ſuch atrocious deeds, could not eaſily be brought to concur in any one meaſure. There remained only one expedient for obtaining an unanimous election, ſuch as the laws of Poland require; namely, the extirpation of one or other of the leading parties. But, as they were pretty equally balanced, fear prevented both from coming to this extremity; and they contented themſelves with electing each the candidate to whoſe intereſt they were attached. Accordingly Maximilian of Auſtria, and Sigiſmond ſon of the king of Sweden by a daughter of Sigiſmond the firſt, were both choſen. A civil war enſued, in which Maximilian, being twice defeated and at laſt taken priſoner, was forced to purchaſe his freedom with the renunciation of his claims.

The long reign of Sigiſmond the third, although

although it was fruitful in diſaſtrous events, produced no material change on the conſtitution. The fortunes of the ſtate were, for many years, ſuſtained by the courage of his ſoldiers, and the ſingular merit of his generals. It required all the ill-judged policy of Sigiſmond the third to fruſtrate the advantages which theſe produced to the ſtate. But this prince was as obſtinate in his political errors, as bigoted in his religious opinions. Educated in a blind veneration for the church of Rome, his catholic zeal loſt him the crown of Sweden. His dilatory and feeble meaſures loſt to his ſon the crown of Ruſſia, after he had been ſolemnly elected at Muſcow. His hopeleſs claims on Sweden engaged him in a ruinous war with the celebrated Guſtavus Adolphus; which an obſtinate adherence to the opinion of his prieſts and confeſſors led him to protract, long after every proſpect of ſucceſs had vaniſhed. The peeviſh averſion which he ſhewed to the doctrines of the reformation excited the ſuſpicion of thoſe who adhered to them. The loſs of Moldavia, Walachia, and

and Livonia alienated the minds of thoſe who preferred the honour of their country to the favour of their king. And ſome attempts to promote the intereſt of his own family in the ſtate, alarmed the jealouſy of thoſe who wiſhed to depreſs the royal influence. The nobles complained of his ſacrificing the intereſts of the nation to promote his perſonal views, and to gratify his own reſentment. Confederacies were formed for the redreſs of grievances. A general feeling of diſcontent pervaded the nation. Theſe diſcontents however were not immediately productive of any important conſequences. They only ſerved to weaken a government naturally inefficient; and to throw odium on a king who was an object of contempt, rather than of hatred. Sigiſmond died in 1632, after a reign of forty-five years. Had he lived in peaceful times, and been placed at the head of a more regular government, he might have been claſſed among the multitude of ſovereigns, whom we pardon for not doing any good, in conſideration of their not doing any harm.

harm. But, both from character and education, he was peculiarly unfit for the times in which he lived, and the kingdom he governed.

The only acceſſion which the ariſtocracy made to their privileges, in the courſe of his reign, was a law ſecuring excluſively to the nobility the landed property of the kingdom; and prohibiting the king or the commons from purchaſing fiefs without the conſent of the diet.

The diet of election was, as uſual, a ſcene of tumult and diſorder, although no other candidate but the ſon of the late king appeared. Ladiſlaus was at laſt elected, and his reign was calamitous chiefly from the effects of his father's injudicious meaſures. A plan had been laid to impoſe the tyrannical principles of the Poliſh ariſtocracy on the Coſſacs of the Ukraine: and the attempt to execute it loſt that brave people to Poland, and had well nigh proved fatal to the ſtate.

Allow me to ſketch the outlines of this revolution:

revolution: it will give you an idea of the principles of the Poliſh nobles.

Stephen Batori had attached the Coſſacs to Poland, by conferring on them a large tract of country in the Ukraine, introducing military diſcipline among them, and giving them various privileges. Equally generous and brave, this people had ſince continued faithful to their benefactors, and done Poland ſignal ſervices in the deſultory invaſions of the Turks and Tartars. But the freedom which the Coſſacs enjoyed had tempted many of the Poliſh peaſants to take refuge amongſt them from the tyranny of their maſters. Various endeavours had been made to reclaim theſe fugitives; but the Coſſacs refuſed to give up, to the vengeance of their maſters, thoſe perſons who had put themſelves under their protection.

In conſequence of this refuſal, it was reſolved to take them by force; and alſo to remove the cauſe of future deſertion by impoſing on the Coſſacs themſelves the ſame ſyſtem of ſlavery which was eſtabliſhed over the Poliſh peaſants. The Coſſacs reſiſted,

ſiſted, but were at firſt worſted, and obliged to deliver up their leaders, as hoſtages for their future behaviour: the Poles, at the ſame time, engaging to withdraw their armies, and leave the Coſſacs in the enjoyment of their liberties.

Having got poſſeſſion of the leaders of the inſurrection, the Poles put them to death; in contempt of the treaty, and of the royal pardon which had been previouſly granted them: and inſtead of withdrawing their army, they augmented it, and laid ſiege to the principal ſtation of the Coſſacs.

The Coſſacs, thus baſely betrayed and inſulted, again flew to arms; defeated their oppoſers in a variety of ſkirmiſhes, and baffled all their attempts. Still, however, they proteſted, that they had no other deſign than to ſecure their privileges; and offered, on the conditions ſtipulated in the laſt treaty, to lay down their arms, and return to their allegiance. The Poles granted what they were in no condition to refuſe: but no ſooner had the Coſſacs diſbanded their forces, than the republic again broke her faith;

and ſent additional forces to overawe the country, and pave the way for the final extinction of the liberty of the Coſſacs.

An act of violence, by no means ſingular in the annals of Poland, drove the Coſſacs to deſpair, and obliged them entirely to throw off their allegiance. In conſequence of a diſpute between Jalinſki governor of the Poliſh fortreſs of Tzerin, and Xmielniſki one of the Coſſac chiefs; the Pole carried off the Coſſac's wife, violated her, and, becauſe ſhe had made reſiſtance, put her to death. Not ſatisfied even with a revenge ſo atrocious, he next proceeded to burn Xmielniſki's houſe, in which his infant ſon periſhed.

Fired with his injuries, the Coſſac flew about among his countrymen, and excited them to take ſignal vengeance on their oppreſſors. The ſentiment of indignation was communicated with rapidity; a general revolt took place; and Xmielniſki was appointed to the ſupreme command. He had the addreſs to engage the neighbouring Tartars in his cauſe; and the combined army

my burſt into Poland with irreſiſtible violence; cut to pieces the troops ſent to oppoſe them; and deſolated the country with the fury of barbarians rendered frantic by perſonal injury. Fortunately however for Poland, the Coſſacs and Tartars at laſt differed about the diviſion of their booty; and this difference obliged them to retire into their own country, and ſaved the ſtate from deſtruction. I leave you to make your own reflections on this hiſtorical *trait*, and return to my ſubject.

While the ariſtocracy, in attempting to annihilate the liberties of the Coſſacs, expoſed the ſtate to a danger which it required the utmoſt efforts to reſiſt, they proceeded to weaken ſtill more the activity of government, and embarraſs its operations by decreeing, That the king ſhould not levy troops, nor declare war, nor conclude peace, nor ſend ambaſſadors, nor enter into alliances, without the concurrence of the diet.

Theſe abridgements of prerogative proceeded evidently from the diſcontents excited by the injudicious meaſures of the late king.

king. Ladiſlaus had done nothing to forfeit the confidence of his ſubjects. His reign had hitherto been proſperous. He had re-annexed to the ſtate ſeveral important places, which the weakneſs of his father had loſt. His internal government was mild and equitable. He reſpected the privileges of the people, and endeavoured to promote their happineſs. But his power was inadequate to the exigencies of the ſtate. With one hand the ariſtocracy ſeized the few branches of prerogative which former diets had ſpared; with the other they attempted to cruſh the Coſſacs. Ladiſlaus was forced to look on a tame ſpectator in the one caſe; in the other he was hurried away by the torrent of national prejudice, into meaſures which no neceſſity could juſtify, nor any reaſon of ſtate excuſe.

Ladiſlaus attempted to terminate the religious diſputes which had gone abroad in his kingdom, by amicable means. He held the balance between the different ſects with as equal a hand as the fervour of the times would

would admit. He preſerved to each that equality of privilege which the *Pacta Conventa* required. But the ſpirit of religious animoſity had gone forth, and the power of the crown was too impotent to reſtrain it. Under the monkiſh adminiſtration of the late king, the catholics had made vaſt acquiſitions. It was the uniform ſyſtem of Sigiſmond, and the only point on which his policy was uniform, to exalt this party. He employed and truſted none but catholics: and he depreſſed the other ſects by every ſpecies of mortification and diſcouragement which his power, directed by the ingenuity of the Jeſuits, could throw in their way. In conſequence of theſe meaſures, the catholic party had acquired a decided ſuperiority. Popery was conſidered as the ſtate religion: the term *diſſidents*, now applied only to thoſe who were not of this religion, had come to involve the idea of *diſſenters from the national faith*; and, notwithſtanding the laudable efforts of Ladiſlaus to preſerve the equality of rights and privileges which the laws of the ſtate had

eſtabliſhed, it was becoming more and more obvious that the catholics would finally triumph over all their antagoniſts.

Ladiſlaus died in 1648, and his paternal brother, John Caſimir, was elected to the throne. John Caſimir had embraced the eccleſiaſtical profeſſion, and was at this time a cardinal. His education among the Jeſuits, of which ſociety he had formerly been a member, gave great uneaſineſs to the proteſtants of his kingdom. They had felt on former occaſions the pernicious conſequences which had ariſen from the influence of this body on the adminiſtration, and they dreaded their aſcendant over a king, who, from education and habits, ſeemed peculiarly ſuſceptible of whatever impreſſions they might chooſe to give him. Caſimir, however, diſappointed their fears. He did not love the proteſtants, but he protected them from motives of policy. The peace of Oliva, concluded during his reign, guarantied to them all their ancient rights.

The commencement of this prince's reign gives us a favourable idea of his character.

No

No ſooner was he ſeated on his throne, than the nobles ſolicited him to take vengeance on the Coſſacs. "If we had been juſt towards the Coſſacs," replied Caſimir, "we "ſhould not now have had occaſion to pu-"niſh their ravages: we have ſanctioned "their exceſſes by ſetting them the exam-"ple."—But the nobles were now too powerful to be controuled by juſtice, or John Caſimir. Without regard to his opinion they raiſed forces to carry on the war, and the king was ſoon forced to yield to meaſures which he could not prevent. Such was the licentiouſneſs of the ariſtocracy, and the weakneſs of the crown!

Indeed Poland never exhibited an appearance of greater weakneſs and diſtraction than during the reign of John Caſimir. The crown now retained no other authority than what aroſe from the perſonal character of the king: and John had neither the art to gain the affections of his people, nor the energy of character to command their eſteem. Hence the government, naturally incoherent, was almoſt diſ-

ſolved. Caſimir was at one time driven out of his kingdom by foreign enemies; and through the whole of his reign forced to contend with a factious nobility. Compelled, at laſt, to take up arms againſt his own ſubjects, he was ſoon worſted; obliged to diſmiſs his troops; haraſſed with endleſs complaints; and ſtunned with the clamorous recital of imaginary grievances; till, tired of holding a mutilated ſovereignty —the ſhadow rather than the ſubſtance of royalty—he reſigned in diſguſt the crown which a trial of twenty years had convinced him was ſo irkſome to the wearer; and retired into France, where he died, about four years after.

The diſaſtrous reign of John Caſimir became ſtill more fatal by the introduction of the *Liberum Veto*, or right which every provincial deputy enjoys of putting a ſtop, by his ſingle negative, to the proceedings of the general diet—a privilege which has contributed more than any other of the Poliſh conſtitutions to the unlimited ſway of miſrule and licentiouſneſs.

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On conſidering the nature of the government previous to the eſtabliſhment of this abſurd regulation, it is difficult to conceive how it came to be admitted, and what purpoſe it could be intended to ſerve. The principles of the conſtitution were already abundantly incoherent. As the nobles were ſubject to no reſtraints but what they choſe to impoſe on themſelves, there was already ſufficient ſcope for the licenſe of the moſt turbulent ſpirits. An higher degree of independence than what they had already enjoyed was impoſſible. One would ſuppoſe therefore that, while the Poles choſe to continue even that looſe ſort of union which ſprings from living in the ſame country, they muſt wiſh to maintain ſome degree of unity in the government, and ſome degree of order in the ſtate; and, conſequently, that they would not have admitted a principle ſubverſive of all order and ſubordination—a principle which tends to impreſs the jarring elements of their conſtitution with a repulſive force, whoſe intenſity increaſes as the preſſure of critical emergencies renders

union neceſſary. Yet ſuch was the temper of the Poliſh nobles, that this wild privilege was no ſooner claimed than it was admitted as an eſſential branch of the conſtitution. A more ſtriking inſtance of national licentiouſneſs, or, which would be a more charitable ſuppoſition, of the inſanity of the diet which admitted it, has never been exhibited!

You will naturally ſuppoſe that there muſt have exiſted ſome very cogent reaſon to urge the diet to ſo dangerous an expedient. Far from it. The privileges of the ariſtocracy were in no danger, and conſequently there was no occaſion for any ſtate-remedy; much leſs for ſo abſurd an application. The *Liberum Veto* was not even the effect of any premeditated ſcheme. It was introduced caſually without any adequate reaſon, and without proper inveſtigation of its probable conſequences. A deputy roſe up, declared that he ſtopped the proceedings of the diet, and retired. A ſudden impulſe of reſentment appears to have hurried him to make this ridiculous

proteſt.

proteſt. The unuſual ſtyle of it raiſed a ferment in the diet. Inſtead of conſidering the deputy as a fool, and diſregarding him; the members proceeded to diſcuſs the effect which ſuch a proteſt ought to have. They proceeded to conſider whether an obſcure deputy from Upita had a right to introduce into the conſtitution a principle which had never before been thought of;—whether a ſingle wrong-headed Lithuanian had a right to give law to the general diet of Poland, and by his ſole authority to throw the government into inevitable and endleſs confuſion: and theſe queſtions they determined in the affirmative, by finding that the proteſt of deputy Sicinſki had actually diſſolved the diet. Such was the principle of Poliſh liberty and equality in the reign of John Caſimir!

The *Liberum Veto* appears the more unaccountable when you conſider it as originating in the repreſentative branch of the conſtitution. The nuncios had no ſhare in the government, except as members of the general diet. Holding no offices of reſponſibility, they

could never, as a body, have ſtate-crimes to be ſcreened from juſtice.—Having no truſt which they could abuſe, they never could find an intereſt in the public confuſion. On the contrary, it was their intereſt to eſtabliſh a regular mode of conducting public buſineſs; to give to the diet that weight which was neceſſary to enforce its deciſions; that dignity which is eſſential to a ſupreme legiſlative aſſembly, calculated to reſtrain alike the tyranny of the ſovereign and the corruption of his ſervants; and to prevent it from being diſſolved until the neceſſary buſineſs of the ſtate ſhould be concluded. This was obviouſly the intereſt of the nuncios: and as it was the only means by which they could permanently eſtabliſh their influence in the government, and diſappoint the attempts of all who might endeavour to encroach on their privileges, by the introduction of the *Veto* they in effect annihilated their own importance in the conſtitution; as they thus put it in the power of every man who choſe to be at the expence of corrupting one of their number,

ber, to render the general diet an uſeleſs excreſcence, which, though it ſtill continued to be attached to the government, could neither accelerate nor retard its motions.

When all queſtions were decided in the diet by plurality of voices, the nuncios neceſſarily poſſeſſed conſiderable weight in the government. The crown-ſervants felt that it was a matter of extreme difficulty to evade the authority of the diet, when ſo many of its members were intereſted in bringing to light and puniſhing every abuſe of their power. They were therefore led to conſult the public good in the exerciſe of their offices, in order to eſcape the animadverſion of the general diet. But when the eſtabliſhment of the *Liberum Veto* enabled them to buy the negative of a deputy, this check on their conduct was removed. Inſtead of making themſelves agreeable to the nation, they had now nothing more to do but to make themſelves rich, and they were ſure of impunity. Thus the exerciſe of power was left without controul, and pub-

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lic virtue deprived of one of its ſtrongeſt ſupports. For, I imagine that, in moſt minds, public virtue is not a little ſtrengthened by motives of private intereſt. The nuncios might indeed ſtill complain of the violation of their privileges, and the iniquity of the executive government. But the hiſtory of Poland affords complete evidence that the exigencies of the public were never ſo great but that a nuncio might be found to ſell his negative; nor the deliberations of the diet ſo regular but that a pretence might be found for interpoſing it.

A meaſure therefore ſo directly oppoſed, not only to the general intereſts of the ſtate, but alſo to the particular views of that branch of the legiſlature from which it originated, and in favour of which it is eſtabliſhed, has never in any other inſtance been conceived. In the poſſibility of occurrences it may indeed happen that the exerciſe of this power may be beneficial. But when you conſider the tendency of ſuch an inſtitution, and the purpoſes to which it has generally been applied, you will probably think that the conduct

duct of the nuncios in this inſtance bears no ſmall affinity to that of thoſe ſagacious gentlemen who revenge an affront by cutting their own throat inſtead of that of their adverſary.

It is probable that Sicinſki expected to be bribed to withdraw his proteſt. This has generally been the view with which the *Veto* has ſince been interpoſed. But the circumſtances of the times prevented this mode of compromiſing the matter. The nobles had been irritated by the king's unwillingneſs to proſecute the Coſſac war. They were farther offended with the terms of the truce which had been granted them. There was therefore a general tendency in the nation to thwart the king's meaſures. The treaſury was exhauſted, and conſiderable arrears were due to the army. The appearances in Ruſſia and Sweden at the ſame time made it neceſſary to provide againſt the ſtorm which was ready to burſt upon the republic from theſe quarters. There was, therefore, a neceſſity for ſeveral additional taxes; and, as theſe could be impoſed only

poſed only by the diet, every meaſure that tended to fruſtrate the deciſions of this aſſembly was favoured by all who wiſhed to ſave, for the preſent, the impoſition of new burdens. All who poſſeſſed any branch of the executive power, or who held any place or office under government, were accountable only to the diet. The king could neither reſtrain, nor puniſh, nor diſplace them. They naturally, therefore, favoured an expedient which tended to ſet them above the controul of the only tribunal that could take cognizance of their conduct. The nobles who were accuſed of capital crimes could be tried by the diet only: and at this period ſome of the greateſt men in the ſtate were ſuſpected of having excited the Coſſac invaſion; and others were charged with different crimes. Theſe and their adherents favoured of courſe an expedient which ſaved them from the ignominy of public juſtice. Beſides all theſe deſcriptions of men, who were led by particular intereſt to ſupport the *Liberum Veto*; there was at this period, and always has been, a numerous

rous party in Poland, who, having no hopes of profit or preferment in the ordinary courſe of regular government, and being reſtrained by no tie of honour or principle, have uniformly fomented faction and diſorder, that they might have a chance of promoting their private intereſt in the midſt of national confuſion. The union of all theſe parties proved too powerful and too clamorous for the friends of order and good government; the *Liberum Veto* was declared an eſſential branch of the Poliſh conſtitution, and the diet ſeparated in great confuſion.

The eſtabliſhment of the *Liberum Veto* completed the Poliſh conſtitution. For a period of about three centuries, the ariſtocracy had been keeping up, by gradual and painful efforts, a ſtructure compoſed of rude and ſhapeleſs parts, which they had not the ſkill to adjuſt to one another. The *Liberum Veto* now crowned the pile; and the whole together forms the moſt ſingular aſſemblage of incoherent materials that ever was exhibited.

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In contemplating this motley maſs we obſerve the outlines of a free conſtitution terminating, by a ſtrange capriciouſneſs of deſign, in ſlavery, and many parts of a noble and regular government, which however produced only miſrule and licentiouſneſs. It has ſomehow happened that the Poles have never been able to hit the due medium between regal tyranny and popular confuſion, which conſtitutes a free government; and from which every deviation is, on the one hand dangerous to liberty, and on the other inconſiſtent with ſubordination and national union. Even thoſe parts of the conſtitution which deſerve the higheſt praiſe are found connected with circumſtances which fruſtrate their end.

I might illuſtrate this in every branch of the conſtitution; but, leſt I ſhould tire your patience, I ſhall confine my obſervations to a few leading points.

The end for which the firſt limitations were impoſed upon the crown was, to ſecure the perſons and the property of the ſubject. This was a noble object, had it been

been purſued upon liberal principles. But the idea of general liberty never entered the minds of the Poliſh reformers. It was their uniform ſyſtem to unite the extremes of freedom and deſpotiſm; to render the diſtance between nobles and plebeians almoſt infinite; and, while they ſecured to the former a perfect freedom from controul, to preclude the latter from every approximation either to political privileges or perſonal ſecurity. A reformation conducted on ſuch principles deſerves no praiſe, ſince it could be productive of no public benefit.

You may, perhaps, imagine that the reaſon for placing ſo many branches of the executive government in the hands of the crown-ſervants, was, to render thoſe who enjoyed them accountable to the nation for the mode in which they exerciſed them. But theſe conſtitutions were founded on no ſuch liberal principles. On the contrary, their object was, to render the great officers of ſtate independent and unaccountable. And this object was completely accompliſhed. For, by veſting theſe branches of the govern-

government for life, thoſe who poſſeſſed them were independent of the crown; and afterwards, by means of the *Liberum Veto*, they were enabled to render themſelves independent of the general diet. The great officers of ſtate were thus rendered ſo many deſpots, who had every temptation which impunity could give to abuſe their power. From this circumſtance many inconveniencies aroſe. It was ſeldom that the great officers of ſtate could all be brought to concur in the ſame views. On the contrary, they were generally divided by hereditary hatred, which nothing could allay; and, as there exiſted no power to reſtrain the whole, it frequently happened that the meaſures which each purſued were calculated for the ſole purpoſe of counteracting thoſe of his adverſaries. Nor did they always wait the ſlow iſſue of intrigue in their competitions. They not unfrequently raiſed armies, fought pitched battles, beſieged one another's houſes, and deſolated one another's eſtates, with all the fury of incenſed ſavages. The king, in the mean time, could hardly fail to of-

fend

fend one or other of the parties; if he did not offend both. Hence he raiſed up many enemies to traverſe his adminiſtration. Nor was this always the worſt conſequence. The nation at large was commonly diſpoſed to extend the reſentment excited by the miſdeeds of his ſervants to the king who had appointed them. Hence he loſt the public confidence; and in a government like that of Poland the loſs of public confidence is neceſſarily followed by the diſſolution of public order.

The practice of placing the principal offices of government in the hands of a few great barons independent of the king, has contributed perhaps as much as the *Liberum Veto* itſelf to introduce irremediable weakneſs and confuſion into the public councils.

The eſtabliſhment of the general diet, and veſting it with the ſupreme legiſlative power, was a meaſure of great national importance. But the advantages which ſhould have ariſen from it were fruſtrated by ſeveral adventitious circumſtances. The election of the nuncios muſt be unanimous;

and as all the nobility have votes in their ſeveral provinces, it is in the power of any one refractory nobleman to exclude his province from its ſhare in the national repreſentation. Inſtead of being ſurpriſed that this mode of election ſhould now and then prevent the choice of a deputy, we may rather wonder that it does not ſometimes prevent the choice of them all. It reflects honour on the temper of the Poles, that ſuch effects have not followed ſo abſurd a regulation.

The time allowed for the ſitting of this aſſembly is much too ſhort. The laws only provide that the general diet ſhall be aſſembled once in two years; and the ſitting of each diet is by poſitive ſtatute limited to ſix weeks. This is by no means adequate to the buſineſs which muſt come before the ſupreme legiſlative aſſembly of a great nation. This regulation was intended to promote the diſpatch of buſineſs, and to ſave the members from the expence of a long reſidence at the place where the meetings were held. But ſuch conſiderations are too childiſh

childiſh to be named in compariſon of the pernicious effects which muſt often ariſe from hurrying over the public buſineſs. Great part even of the ſhort ſpace allotted for the ſitting of the diet is conſumed in going through the ordinary forms of the aſſembly, and in ſquabbling about the election of a marſhal: ſo that very little buſineſs can be tranſacted in the courſe of any one diet; and that little muſt be done in a ſuperficial, ſlovenly manner.

The powers of the general diet appear to be too extenſive for a mixed government. This aſſembly, beſides poſſeſſing the ſupreme legiſlative and judicial authority, declares war, and concludes peace, levies troops, and ſends ambaſſadors, and enters into alliances. The veſting of theſe branches of executive government in the diet neceſſarily produces a great degree of languor and debility in the national exertions. When you conſider that the diet muſt be ſummoned at leaſt ſix weeks before the time of meeting, and make a reaſonable allowance for the ordinary delays

occaſioned by the intrigues of party, and the difficulty of reconciling every member to any one ſet of meaſures, you will probably think that it would be no eaſy matter to contrive a ſyſtem of government leſs fitted for activity and vigour.

The hiſtory of Poland affords many calamitous inſtances of the weakneſs occaſioned by lodging ſo many branches of the executive government in the general diet. The ſtate has ſometimes been brought to the brink of ruin, before the king was empowered to take the neceſſary ſteps for its defence. In a country ſurrounded by powerful and warlike neighbours ſome portion of liberty ſhould perhaps be riſked, to give the executive government a proper degree of ſtrength and activity. A nation which depends for its ſafety on the forbearance of its neighbours may indeed be free; but its freedom is a freedom little to be envied. To give to a people the real enjoyment of liberty, it muſt be ſecured to them from without as well as from within. The Poles appear to have apprehended only the latter danger; they

they have taken infinite pains to ſecure themſelves againſt their own ſovereigns, long after the power of the crown had ceaſed to be formidable; and they have allowed the ſtrength of government to languiſh and decay in the midſt of dangers which called for more than ordinary exertion. In this reſpect their conduct has certainly been injudicious; ſince, by leaving the executive government much more under the direction of the crown, they might have preſerved unimpaired their national ſtrength, without endangering their privileges. For it ſeems inconceivable, that a king hedged in on every ſide by preciſe reſtrictions, watched by the vigilant eye of a nobility jealous of their independence, and unſupported by the ſentiment of reſpect attached to hereditary ſovereignty, ſhould be able to ſubvert the conſtitution, even although his power were much more extenſive than that of a king of Poland.

Laſtly, although the conſtitution of the general diet were perfect in every other reſpect, the power which every provincial

deputy enjoys of diſſolving the aſſembly whenever he thinks proper, would fruſtrate every advantage which could be expected from it. In truth, from the eſtabliſhment of this abſurd privilege, the general diet has almoſt always come to an untimely end. The nation has of conſequence remained without laws, and almoſt without government; and Poland has exhibited the appearance ſo happily deſcribed in the Bible, when "*there was no king in Iſrael, and* "*every man did that which was right in his* "*own eyes.*"

LET-

LETTER LXI.

DEAR SIR, Memel, April 1792.

HAD the Poliſh nobles underſtood their own intereſt, or that of their country, they would have been cautious of weakening the energy of their government by farther limitations of the royal prerogative than thoſe that exiſted at the death of Caſimir IV. —they would have endeavoured to perfect that form of government which was already ſketched out. With this end in view, their meaſures might have been directed to enſure a regular ſucceſſion of general diets, by obliging the king to ſummon them at ſtated periods; to give to thoſe aſſemblies a more direct ſhare in the legiſlature by beſtowing on them the privilege of propoſing laws, as well as that of rejecting thoſe propoſed by the crown; and, above all, to give to the

king the power of reſtraining the encroachments of the diet, as well as to the diet the power of checking the uſurpations of the king.

But it ſeems inſeparable from liberty to puſh its claims beyond a juſt and reaſonable degree of freedom. No ſooner have men ceaſed to be ſlaves than they aſpire to be maſters. Political liberty and political power, like adjoining colours in the priſmatic ſcale, are ſo blended at their point of union, that you muſt make conſiderable advances on either ſide before the diſtinction become perfectly apparent. Hence the tranſition from liberty to power is eaſy and natural; and power, once attained, always increaſes its activity, in proportion as it makes new acceſſions. Hence it has happened that in our own country *the privileges of the people* has generally been only a popular phraſe for the *power of their leaders*. The ſame thing has happened in Poland; and perhaps it always will happen in all human ſocieties. To ſecure the liberty of the ſubjects againſt the tyranny of the crown has

has been the pretence of the ſucceſſive changes which have taken place in the conſtitution of Poland; but the real deſign has been to throw the whole power of the ſtate into the hands of the ariſtocracy.

The condition of the peaſants forms the beſt commentary on the conduct of the nobles. While theſe men were covering their uſurpations with the name of liberty, they left the peaſants to languiſh in the moſt miſerable and hopeleſs ſlavery: while with one hand theſe men ſeized ſucceſſively almoſt every branch of the king's prerogative, with the other they bound harder the fetters of the people: while they raiſed themſelves above the control of law, they ſunk the people below its protection. If we attend to theſe facts, Sir, we ſhall not be inclined to give much praiſe to that liberty of which the Poles boaſt; nor to allow great credit to the patriotiſm of its aſſertors.

It is indeed true, that the powers of which the crown was already deprived, were, upon the whole, thoſe which no man who

who deſerves to be free will ever wiſh to ſee veſted in the crown. But it is by no means ſo certain that they were more ſafely lodged in the crown-ſervants, and in the general diet, on the principles on which they received them. An Engliſhman will, I am perſuaded, be of opinion, that, unleſs freedom of the nation at large keep pace with the reſtrictions impoſed on the ſovereign, the people will only exchange one maſter for a multitude; and, as the minute ramifications of power thus divided come into a more immediate contact with every order of men in the ſtate, he will probably think that they are likely to become vexatious and oppreſſive, according as the diminution of their ſize multiplies their number. Excuſe for the preſent the diſapprobation with which I ſpeak of Poliſh liberty, and Poliſh patriotiſm. When you have ſeen their effect, I ſhall not need to make any farther apology.

The reign of John Albert, one of the younger ſons of Caſimir IV. who was elected on the death of his father, to the exclusion

excluſion of his elder brothers, produced no alteration in the conſtitution. Let me give the generoſity of the ariſtocracy in ſparing the weakneſs of this prince its due praiſe. It is a praiſe I ſhall not often have occaſion to repeat.

I need not inform you, that the diet of election, which met on the demiſe of John Albert, was a ſcene of faction, intrigue, animoſity, and corruption. You may always take it for granted, that a Poliſh election is the triumph of ſelfiſh views and party violence over public ſpirit and rational deciſion. The two oldeſt ſons of Caſimir IV. were again excluded, and the national choice fell upon Alexander, another of his ſons, whoſe character and connections were ſuppoſed more ſuitable to the intereſts of the ſtate.

This prince loved and encouraged the polite arts. But the liberality with which he rewarded men of genius accorded ill with the parſimonious temper of the ariſtocracy, which repreſented it as exceſſive, and tending to impoveriſh the ſtate. In conſequence

quence of theſe apprehenſions, a law was paſſed which prohibited the king form diſpoſing of the public revenue without the conſent of the diet. The only other alteration of importance which took place during the courſe of this reign, was that by which the king was deprived of the power of altering the forms of procedure in the courts of juſtice. Theſe regulations were reaſonable and ſalutary; as, without weakening the neceſſary energy of government, they only ſecured the perſons and property of the ſubject againſt the peculation and the tyranny of their governors.

The death of Alexander, in 1507, opened the ſucceſſion to his elder brother Sigiſmond, who had twice before been diſappointed of it. The abilities of this monarch ſuſtained, during the courſe of a long and glorious reign, the tottering power of the crown. His vigilance reſtrained the licentiouſneſs of the ariſtocracy: the rectitude of his meaſures removed the ordinary pretexts for innovation; and the general proſperity of the country, ariſing chiefly from the

the ſuperior talents of the king, and the excellence of his adminiſtration, procured him the love and veneration of his ſubjects.

It has been generally ſaid, that the mildneſs of his government was favourable to this increaſing power of the nobles. But the opinion ſeems founded on a partial view of his ſituation. Men who ſaw the power of the nobles conſtantly increaſing, and regretted the confuſion likely to reſult from their exorbitant pretenſions, have blamed Sigiſmond for not performing impoſſibilities. In fact, the ariſtocracy was already uncontrollable. They had become ſenſible of their power, and only waited for an occaſion to ſeize the whole authority of the ſtate. It reflects no inconſiderable honour on the abilities of Sigiſmond, that his adminiſtration afforded them no pretence for any great innovation. Petty grievances were indeed, as uſual, complained of, on the demand of the new ſubſidies; and Sigiſmond never denied to the wiſhes of his people what he thought they were entitled to demand, or what he found himſelf in no condition

condition to refuſe. He reſpected the privileges of his ſubjects from the rectitude of his principles; he yielded in ſome caſes to their prejudices from political diſcernment. He was too enlightened not to ſee the folly of irritating a body of men whom he could not ſubdue; and of exciting unreaſonable demands, by refuſing claims of no material conſequence. He knew the impetuous character of his nobles, and he ſtudied to acquire their confidence, that he might be enabled to promote the proſperity of his country.

Accordingly, his reign is one of the moſt fortunate periods of the Poliſh annals: and, although he was not able permanently to fix the limits of the conſtitution, nor effectually to check its tendency towards confuſion, he at leaſt retarded its progreſs. He tranſmitted to his ſon the crown, which he had worn with diſtinguiſhed honour for upwards of forty years, unimpaired in its luſtre. He was able even to give to the conſtitution a contrary direction to that in which it had formerly been impelled, by procuring,

procuring, towards the close of his reign, his son to be elected his successor. This was the last effort which was made to increase the influence of the crown, and its effects were only transitory.

From the reign of Casimir the Great it had been a favourite object with the nobles to render the crown wholly elective. Several attempts had been made, if not to establish an order of succession, at least to prevent the confusion of an interregnum, by appointing the successor to the crown during the life of the reigning king. Lewis had procured Sigismond of Brandenburg to be elected his successor; but the diet afterwards set aside his election. Ladislaus Jaghello also obtained a partial consent to the nomination of his son to the succession: but although the diet afterwards elected him, they showed sufficiently, by their conduct, that the previous form of nomination had no influence on their decision. But Sigismond Augustus succeeded to the throne on the demise of his father,

with

with the ſame facility as if he had held his title by hereditary right.

The nobles ſoon repented of their complaiſance for their favourite monarch.—Some ſteps of Sigiſmond Auguſtus, at the commencement of his reign, particularly his having married without the conſent of the diet, excited diſcontents among the ariſtocracy. The diet inſiſted that the king ſhould repudiate his wife; the king refuſed to comply with their demand; and the aſſembly was diſſolved with very bad impreſſions of their new monarch. This diſcontent appears to have given occaſion to one of the moſt fatal of the Poliſh laws; as, a few years afterwards, Sigiſmond was compelled to agree that the reigning king ſhould not in any meaſure interfere in the appointment of his ſucceſſor, and that the unlimited right of election ſhould be veſted in the nobles.

The death of Sigiſmond Auguſtus without iſſue gave complete efficacy to this regulation. He died in 1572; and in him the male branch of the houſe of Jaghello became extinct.

This family had governed Poland near two centuries; and, although hiſtory affords few examples of a race of princes who better deſerved the confidence and eſteem of their ſubjects, it was their fate to ſee the prerogatives of the crown gradually mouldering away, till at laſt little elſe than the name of royalty was left them. Beſet with a turbulent and ambitious nobility, whoſe encroachments it required a perpetual effort to reſiſt, they found their influence in the government imperceptibly diminiſhed, and the ſtrength of the crown waſted, till, at the death of Sigiſmond Auguſtus, the conſtitution aſſumed a new form; and, from being a monarchy limited and controlled by a popular aſſembly, became a republic, or more properly an ariſtocracy, with a firſt magiſtrate elected for life.

The abilities of the Jaghello family had rendered Poland flouriſhing at home, and reſpected abroad. But this appearance of things was ſoon to be changed. Poland was henceforth doomed to experience all the miſeries conſequent on popular elections,

where there is neither law nor authority to reſtrain the electors. She was deſtined to ſee her internal economy thrown into irreparable confuſion, by the interference of all the nations of Europe in her domeſtic affairs, without either public ſpirit or national vigour to ſupport her independence; and to feel the imbecility reſulting from the diſperſion of the powers of government among a multitude of independent nobles, whoſe views could ſeldom be united, and directed to a ſingle object; becauſe there exiſted no power to conſolidate the diſcordant maſs, and prevent the exceſſes of party diſſenſions.

While the crown was ſupported by hereditary influence, there was, on every election, ſome candidate to whom the majority of the nation was attached from a reſpect for the reigning family: there was no pretence for the interference of foreigners, as no foreign ſtate could hope to give a king to a nation which, though it elected its ſovereign, confined its choice to ſome individual of the family of its ancient kings.

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In theſe circumſtances, the ſquabbles of the different factions, though often conducted with great violence, were terminated with the greater facility, as they were not fomented and exaſperated by foreign influence and foreign gold. In theſe circumſtances too, the crown neceſſarily retained conſiderable authority. Its real power had indeed been long on the decline, and the ariſtocracy had acquired a decided preponderancy. But ſtill it required a degree of union among the nobles which in Poland was not always eaſily obtained, to aſcertain their ſuperiority.

But all reſtraint from hereditary influence was now at an end. The nobles were maſters of the ſtate, uncontrolled, and unaccountable. And, as there was no candidate whoſe claims were ſupported by the reſpect which naturally follows hereditary dominion, each individual conſulted his particular intereſt, and endeavoured to make the beſt bargain he could for himſelf. The ſame circumſtances gave occaſion to the interference of foreign powers in the ap-

proaching election. The ſovereignty of Poland was a ſplendid object of ambition: the electors were venal; and the wealth of foreign candidates flowed in liberal ſtreams. Under the pretence of finding a prince who might ſupport by his alliance the power of the ſtate, each party, and almoſt each individual too, ſupported the intereſt of the candidate by whom they were paid, until they received a higher price from ſome of his competitors.

Thus, by their practice of ſetting up their crown to the higheſt bidder, and courting the interference of foreign nations in their domeſtic affairs, the Poles have been ſelling their independence as a nation for the courſe of two centuries. It muſt be aſcribed to the jealous care with which the nations of Europe have long profeſſed to maintain the equilibrium of their political balance, and to the difficulty of dividing the ſpoils of an extenſive kingdom, that, under ſuch a vicious form of government, the Poles have ſo long continued to maintain a ſeparate exiſtence as a nation. A

cynical

cynical obſerver might be excuſed for aſſerting, that, if they have not already been entirely ſubjected to a foreign yoke, they at leaſt have deſerved it.

Let me however do them juſtice. A party in the ſtate blended reſpect for the family of their late kings with a concern for their own particular profit; and while, like their fellow-electors, they attached themſelves to a candidate who could ſatisfy their avarice, they reſolved to ſtipulate with him that he ſhould marry the princeſs Anne, ſiſter of their late monarch.

But while each party ſupported a different candidate, according as inclination, or intereſt, or principle dictated, there was one point in which they all agreed. They all determined not to give themſelves a maſter who might let them feel his power. To provide againſt this danger, the *Pacta Conventa*, the origin of which I formerly mentioned, were drawn up in a more regular form, and containing a more numerous catalogue of ſtipulations, than uſual. This deed comprehended the whole

of the privileges and powers which the nobles had obtained from their kings, from the reign of Lewis to the preſent time, together with ſome new articles which were added for farther ſecurity. In order to obtain at all times an opportunity of preſenting their grievances, and watching over the conduct of adminiſtration, it was provided that the general diet, the holding of which had hitherto depended on the will of the king, ſhould be convened at leaſt once every two years. With the ſame view, it was reſolved that ſixteen reſident ſenators ſhould be named, who ſhould always be ready to aſſiſt the king with their advice, in the intervals between the diets. But this inſtitution was not carried into effect during the few months that Henry reigned in Poland. In order that every nobleman might have his claim of ſharing the profits ariſing from the *ſale of the crown*, it was ſtipulated that every gentleman in the kingdom ſhould have a vote in the diet of election. And in order to impreſs the king with a proper ſenſe of both the duty and dependence of his ſituation, it

was

was enacted, that his infraction of this original compact ſhould involve the releaſe of his ſubjects from all their allegiance, and cancel his right to the throne. This deed the king was to ratify previouſly to his coronation; and all the clauſes contained in it were to be regarded, in all time coming, as fundamental articles of the conſtitution.

The framing of theſe ſtipulations was the firſt act of legiſlation exerciſed by the nobility. Formerly the nobles had only a negative on the legiſlative prerogative of the crown. On the death of Sigiſmond Auguſtus, the legiſlative power naturally devolved to them, not by any expreſs law, but becauſe they choſe to aſſume it; and becauſe there was no authority in the ſtate to diſpute their claim.

In one reſpect, the diet exerciſed their newly acquired right of legiſlation with ſingular judgment and moderation.

The doctrines of the reformation had already made great progreſs in Poland.—The two Sigiſmonds, although they appear to have entertained no thoughts of ſeparat-

ing from the communion of the church of Rome, were however moderate enough to allow their ſubjects to judge for themſelves in religious matters. Whether this moderation proceeded from their having formed juſt notions of the effects of religious toleration, or from their inability to check the tendency of their ſubjects towards the reformed dogmas, I ſhall not determine; but it is certain that they employed indifferently men of either ſect. And the conſequence of this indirect management of the new doctrines was, that at the death of Sigiſmond Auguſtus the collective body of thoſe who diſſented from the Roman catholic communion, including alſo thoſe who adhered to the Greek church, of which the number was conſiderable, comprehended much the moſt numerous, as well as the moſt powerful party in the ſtate.

The ſituation of Europe at this period naturally impreſſed this party with anxiety. Religious fanaticiſm had lately armed the inhabitants of ſome of the neighbouring countries againſt one another, with more than

than ſavage fury; and had given birth to deeds of uncommon atrocity and violence. The principle of diſcord was yet unſubdued, though its activity had ſuffered a temporary relaxation. The ſtate of Europe indicated the inaction of general debility, rather than the tranquillity of ſettled peace. It was uncertain how ſoon the unextinguiſhed ſparks of diſſenſion might again burſt forth: it was uncertain in what direction the flame might be impelled, and whom it might conſume. In theſe circumſtances, it was equally the intereſt of all parties to guard againſt a danger which muſt inevitably be deſtructive to all, whichever party ſhould finally prevail.

To cut off, therefore, all pretence for religious animoſity, an article was inſerted in the *Pacta Conventa*, declaring the perfect equality of all the different religious ſects in point of rights and privileges; baniſhing the idea of a dominant religion, and declaring it treaſonable to attempt exciting any diſturbances in the ſtate on account of religious differences. The king was to engage ſolemnly

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to keep peace among the *diſſidents* in religion—a name applied not to one, but equally to all parties, and intended to mark ſimply the difference of religious opinions, excluding the idea of conformity or non-conformity to a national ſtandard—and to maintain inviolably the equality of privileges among the different ſects.

This moderation reflects the higheſt honour on the diet, when it is contraſted with that phrenſy of fanaticiſm which at this period too generally diſgraced the Chriſtian name, and impelled almoſt every other nation of Europe to decide their religious controverſies by the ſanguinary logic of maſſacre and extirpation. It is indeed true, that the nature of the Poliſh government, by giving too ample ſcope to faction and miſrule, has enabled the Roman catholic party completely to fruſtrate the good effects of thoſe ſalutary regulations: but it ſhould be remembered to the honour of Poland, that it was the firſt Chriſtian nation whoſe religious differences were conducted with temper, and adjuſted on the liberal princi-

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ple of general toleration, and participation of privilege.

The Duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry III. of France, was the firſt who received the crown after it was thus abridged of its prerogatives, and rendered wholly elective. Beſides purchaſing his election by private donations to a great amount; and by the ratification of the *Pacta Conventa*, he was obliged to promiſe ſeveral other advantages to Poland. The payment of an annual ſubſidy; the ſupport of a body of cadets; the ſending of a fleet into the Baltic to co-operate with the Poliſh armies; and the liquidation of the debts contracted by the late king, were inſiſted on, and agreed to. The article by which the king obliged himſelf to marry the princeſs Anne was, for the preſent, delayed. The perſonal charms of the lady muſt indeed have been for ſome time on the decline, as ſhe was now approaching to her grand climacteric; on which account we need not wonder that a young king, though a Frenchman, ſhould not diſcover any ſingular eagerneſs for the nuptial bliſs.

Henry

Henry had been only a few months in Poland, when the death of Charles IX. opened to him the ſucceſſion to the crown of France. Apprehending that the Poles might obſtruct his departure, he quitted the kingdom privately. The nobles conſidered his flight as an inſult on the ſtate, and declared the throne vacant; thus eſtabliſhing by precedent, as they had already done by law, their right to depoſe a ſovereign whom they conſidered unworthy to reign.

The interregnum was, as uſual, a ſcene of violence and confuſion, of which a double election was the conſequence; the emperor Maximilian and Stephen Batori being each proclaimed by their reſpective parties. The death of Maximilian very ſoon after his election left Batori without a competitor, and ſaved Poland from a civil war. This danger being removed, the diet proceeded to carry into effect the law which ordained the appointment of ſixteen reſident ſenators to aſſiſt the king with their advice, or rather to control him in the exerciſe of the

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few prerogatives which the courteſy of the ariſtocracy permitted him to enjoy.

The next ſtep of the diet was to deprive the king of the right of judging in the laſt reſort. He had formerly been diveſted of the right of altering the eſtabliſhed forms of proceeding in the courts of juſtice; but theſe courts had hitherto continued to derive their authority from him; they were accountable to him; and their deciſions liable to be reviewed by him. It was now enacted that each province ſhould, in its provincial aſſemblies, elect its own judges, whoſe deciſion ſhould be final; and that in all capital caſes the nobles ſhould be ſubject only to the juriſdiction of the general diet.

The privileges of a Poliſh noble were now of high importance. He was his own legiſlator, and his own judge: he could make kings, and he could ſtrip them of their diadem; and, although he muſt ſtill be indebted to the ſovereign he had given himſelf, for whatever office he held in the government; yet, when he had once

once got poſſeſſion, he held it during life, in contempt of every earthly power.—Such ſplendid attributes were too valuable to be communicated at the pleaſure of a king. The crown was therefore deprived of this power; and the ſacred privileges of nobility were ſecured from the profane touch of the vulgar, by a law which enacted, That no commoner ſhould be ennobled without the conſent of the diet.

You may perhaps aſk, In what could the power of a king of Poland now conſiſt? It depended chiefly on the opinion of his ſubjects, on the ſentiment of reſpect for majeſty which had deſcended from former times, and on the habits formed by a once unlimited obedience; which, though they were gradually wearing off, ſtill gave to the nation at large a tendency to ſubordination, when no circumſtances intervened to counteract their effect. A ſovereign who was reſpected and beloved might influence the national councils by the exerciſe of his virtues, or the attachment to his perſon. He might thus revive the ancient habits of obedience, and

conduct

conduct his adminiſtration with tolerable ſmoothneſs and facility.

But wretched was the ſituation of that king who once loſt the confidence of his nobles. If his abilities ſecured him from their contempt, he was ſure to be perſecuted by their hatred. He was irretrievably doomed to have his meaſures thwarted by factions which he could neither oppoſe with ſucceſs nor yield to with honour, to have his beſt intentions miſrepreſented, his favours repaid by ingratitude, and to maintain a hopeleſs ſtruggle againſt miſrule and licentiouſneſs, which he was unable to reſtrain, and durſt not puniſh.

Batori was fortunate enough to obtain the confidence of the nobility; and conſequently the inefficiency of the government was but little felt during the courſe of his reign. The reſpect inſpired by his talents and integrity enabled him to unite the diſcordant principles of the conſtitution, and direct the combined force of the ſtate; and as his meaſures were generally calculated to promote the real intereſts of his kingdom, rather

ther than to procure to himſelf any celebrity, his adminiſtration was highly beneficial to Poland. He died in 1586, leaving behind him the well-merited reputation of a prince whoſe abilities deſerved the eſteem of his ſubjects, while his virtues merited their love.

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LETTER LXII.

STEPHEN BATORI was ſucceeded on the Poliſh throne, in 1586, by Sigiſmond the ſon of John king of Sweden, to whom alſo he ſucceeded on the throne of Sweden. Sigiſmond, a weak and bigoted prince, devoted himſelf almoſt wholly to matters of religion. He gained many converts, deſtroyed many proteſtant churches, erected many convents, founded many ſeminaries; but he was deprived of the kingdom of Sweden; loſt to Poland the provinces of Livonia, Moldavia, and Wallachia; and laid the foundation of a dreadful rebellion of the Coſſacs, which broke out in the reign of his ſucceſſor, and deluged Poland for near half a century.

The name of *diſſidents* had hitherto comprehended the Roman catholics as well as other ſects: but the former having increaſed greatly in number and influence, conſidered themſelves as the national church,

and applied the term *diſſidents* excluſively to the Greeks and Proteſtants. Still however theſe ſects maintained their right of eligibility to the rights of the executive as well as the legiſlative power almoſt undiſputed. And, in all the diets, a perfect coequality of all the different ſects was recognized as a fundamental law of the kingdom.

Uladiſlaus, who ſucceeded his father Sigiſmond in 1632, did not adopt the ſentiments, or follow the plan, of his predeceſſor. He endeavoured to reconcile the different ſects, but all his attempts were in vain. He was more ſucceſsful in his wars with foreign powers. He repreſſed the attacks of the Ruſſians and Turks; and forced the Swedes to reſtore all the dominions raviſhed from Poland in the conteſt between his father and Guſtavus Adolphus. The death of Uladiſlaus was followed by a tumultuous interregnum, the calamities of which were heightened by the incurſions and ravages of the Coſſacs, ſtirred up to rebellion by encroachments made in the reign of Uladiſlaus upon their privileges.

John Caſimir, brother of Uladiſlaus, and the laſt prince of the female branch of the houſe of Jaghello, was choſen king in 1649. In his reign, in 1654, Smolenſko was taken by the Ruſſians: and, the next year, Charles Guſtavus of Sweden overran the greateſt part of Poland, and ſeized upon Poliſh Pruſſia. The reſiſtance made to this invader by the ſingle city of Dantzick gave the Poles time to re-aſſemble; and their king John Caſimir, who had fled into Siberia, being joined by the Tartars, fell upon the Swedes, who were either diſperſed or exterminated. Peace was concluded in 1660 at Oliva; by which however the Poles were obliged to reſign their pretenſions to Livonia, and to cede Smolenſko, Kiow, and other places, to the Ruſſians. Eight years after this, the Poliſh nobles became diſſatisfied with their king: and their king, in return being diſſatisfied with the nobles, abdicated the throne, and retired into France, where he died. By the peace of Oliva, it was expreſsly ſtipulated, "that all the ſubjects of "Poland, of whatever condition or chriſtian

" ſect they might be, ſhould be reinſtated in " all their rights and privileges, whether civil " or eccleſiaſtic, which they had heretofore " enjoyed according to the laws of the " kingdom."

John Caſimir was ſucceeded by Michael Thomas Wiſnowiſki. His reign was ſhort and unfortunate. The Turks wreſted from him the fortreſs of Kaminiec, and all the province of Podolia.

On the death of Michael in 1674, the Poliſh crown was conferred on John Sobieſki, high marſhal and general in chief of the kingdom, who had acquired great reputation by a ſignal victory gained over the Turks at Choczim. Sobieſki protected the proteſtants; but they had loſt much of their conſequence, by inſenſibly loſing their place in the ſenate; for though they had not been declared inadmiſſible into that body by any law, yet as the nomination of members depended on the king, and the kings had always been catholics, they had named none but thoſe of their own communion. This martial prince, in 1683, entered into a league with the

the Auſtrians, for the defence of Chriſtendom (as the chriſtian countries were then called) againſt the Turks, whom by a deciſive victory he obliged to raiſe the ſiege of Vienna.

After the death of Sobieſki in 1696, Frederic Auguſtus, elector of Saxony, was choſen king of Poland in 1698. In 1699, by a peace concluded at Carlowitz, between the confederated Germans and Poles on the one part, and the Turks on the other, the Ottoman court reſtored to the Poles Podolia and the fortreſs of Kaminiec. The Poles, on the ratification of the peace of Carlowitz, inſiſted that the king ſhould ſend back his Saxon forces into Germany: but he found means to retain them, by repreſenting the neceſſity of oppoſing them to the Swedes in Livonia. —Auguſtus in 1700 entered into a confederacy with the Danes, Ruſſians, and Brandenburghers againſt Charles XII. king of Sweden; in which war Auguſtus was defeated by the Swedes in ſeveral battles. He was depoſed from the throne by Charles, who alſo raiſed Staniſlaus to the throne in

his ſtead, in 1704. Staniſlaus remained on the throne during the proſperity of his heroic friend and patron. But Charles XII. being defeated at Pultowa by the Ruſſians (whom he had taught, according to the prediction of Peter the Great, to conquer him), and obliged to take refuge in Turkey, Auguſtus was by the victorious Czar reſtored to the throne of Poland. This prince died in 1733, after a turbulent reign. The king of France, Louis XV. on this event, endeavoured to maintain the claim of his father-in-law Staniſlaus to the Poliſh throne, by force of arms: but Auguſtus, the ſon of the late king Auguſtus II. being ſupported by a powerful army of Saxons and Ruſſians, was raiſed to the Poliſh throne, under the name of Auguſtus III. By a ſubſequent treaty, an aſylum and retreat was afforded to the philoſophical and good Staniſlaus, in the duchy of Bar, and Lorraine.

In this conciſe deduction of the hiſtory of Poland, I have endeavoured to keep a ſteady eye on the ſtate and condition of the

the different ſects of religion; becauſe it was the diſputes among theſe that gave a handle for intrigue, and invited the interference of foreign powers, and may be conſidered in fact as the procuring cauſe of the ruin of the monarchy—a leſſon that ſeems to ſhew, that ſtates and princes ought either to grant religious toleration in its full extent, and unſhackled by reſtrictions and excluſions of any kind, or abſolutely to ſuppreſs all public meetings for the purpoſe of worſhip, out of the pale of the national church*. I therefore return a ſhort way on my ſteps, in regard to time, for the purpoſe of obſerving that Auguſtus II. ſhewed all the zeal of a new proſelyte in proof of the ſincerity of his converſion from the proteſtant to the catholic faith. At a diet aſſembled in the year 1717, the firſt law was paſſed againſt the public exerciſe of the proteſtant religion. The law was drawn up by a biſhop, read

* Leaving entire not only the right of private judgment in matters of religion, but that alſo of men and women, united by religious ſympathies, convening in private families.

but once, and tumultuouſly paſſed. This diet was diſſolved at the end of ſeven hours from the time of its firſt aſſembling. The time however was not yet arrived when the violation of an original compact between independent parties could be carried without oppoſition. The year following another diet was ſummoned, and this article was explained, and declared to reſpect only the abuſes which had crept in during the war with Sweden. The deciſive blow was not ſtruck till the year 1736, under the reign of Auguſtus III.; when the catholics began by forcing from the houſe all the proteſtant nuncios; and then paſſed a law declaring them incapable of all civil poſts and employments whatever.

Auguſtus III. died at Dreſden in October 1763, and was ſucceeded on the throne by the preſent king, the count Staniſlaus Poniatowſki, in September 1764, by the title of *Staniſlaus Auguſtus*. The life of this prince, renowned for talents and virtues at his acceſſion to the throne, and who has ever ſince abundantly fulfilled the high expectations

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that had been formed of his conduct, in the moſt various and trying viciſſitudes, ſeems to have been born, and exalted to his diſtinguiſhed ſtation, for the purpoſe of proving the doctrine that the preſent is a ſtate of probation, and not of an equal diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments. His reign, though eminently diſtinguiſhed by the moſt patriotic diſintereſtedneſs as well as wiſdom, has been one ſcene of confuſion, convulſion and diſaſter. In many political conſtitutions, and in many caſes, the fate of princes and ſtates depends on the characters of thoſe who hold the reins of government. But this general rule, it ſeems, admits of ſome exceptions. As in the moral world the beſt and the moſt virtuous men are not always the happieſt, ſo it may likewiſe happen in the political world, (that thoſe princes and legiſlators ſuffer the greateſt misfortunes who have the leaſt deſerved them. An overbearing force, ariſing out of an extreme peculiarity and as it were capriciouſneſs in the internal conſtitution of Poland, and alſo in the characters, intereſts,

reſts, and views of neighbouring potentates,) defied all the genius and virtues of Staniſlaus Auguſtus, and equally triumphed over moral rectitude and political prudence.

From a ſtupor that had fallen on Poland from ihe interferenee of foreign powers, whoſe arms and intrigues dictated all the great meaſures of government, it came to paſs, that the native Poles ſeemed to forget their political exiſtence; and no one, from education or experience, had attained the qualifications neceſſary for diſcharging, particularly with regard to foreign affairs, the functions of a politician and ſtateſman: inſomuch that, when it became indiſpenſably neceſſary to write occaſionally to countries beyond the frontiers, foreigners were employed in this buſineſs. Neither was the ſcience of war known to any others beſides thoſe whom the ſpirit of adventure had thrown into the military ſervice of other nations. In theſe circumſtances, the king eſtabliſhed a corps of cadets, for which purpoſe he employed, in the two firſt years of his reign, the ſum of 120,000 ducats out

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of his own private fortune, as appears by the declaration of the conſtitution in 1766. The Pruſſian miniſter in Poland wrote to his maſter, that this inſtitution was the forerunner of projects which it would be proper to cruſh in the bud. The eſtabliſhment of a corps of cadets could not be openly ſtated as a ſubject of complaint: Frederic therefore reſolved to diſturb the tranquillity of the Poliſh nation in another manner.

Whether the Empreſs of Ruſſia was really ſtruck with the juſtice of the cauſe of the diſſidents; whether ſhe was animated with the idea of being the firſt chriſtian ſovereign to employ civil power in defence of a general toleration in matters of religion; or whether ſhe meant, by protecting the rights of the Greeks and Proteſtants, to form a ſtrong party in the republic, and gain the confidence and attachment of the Greek church in every part of the world; certain it is that her miniſter had orders to preſent a memorial to the king of Poland, ſoon after his election, reclaiming in favour of the Greeks and Proteſtants all their ancient rights,

rights, liberties and prerogatives. The memorial, having preciſely determined what was the redreſs expected in eccleſiaſtical matters, goes on to aſſert the co-equality of all the different ſects in their civil capacity; leaving it however to the catholics to determine, by-way of treaty with the Greeks and Proteſtants, to what part they ſhould be entitled in the adminiſtration of government. The empreſs, ſerious and earneſt in this buſineſs, engaged the courts of London, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Berlin, in the ſame cauſe. The demands in favour of the *diſſidents*, hitherto moderate and juſt, and ſupported by ſuch a confederacy, were rejected by the Poliſh ſtates, to whom the memorial containing them was of courſe referred. Though the king recommended it to their moſt ſerious attention, they were ſo far from paying any regard to it, that they confirmed in their full extent the conſtitutions againſt the diſſidents, of the year 1717, and 1736. This conduct, ſo little to have been expected, was inſtigated by the intrigues of the king of Pruſſia.

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It is the nature of every paſſion, in every mind, to bear directly and by the neareſt courſe on its object. The defiles of art are ſeldom preferred to open force, where force may be employed with any tolerable proſpect of ſucceſs. Peter and his ſucceſſors on the Ruſſian throne, though anxious enough to cover their ambitious projects under a veil of juſtice, and even magnanimity, never thought of carrying any great end otherwiſe than by the arm of power. The kings of Pruſſia, who poſſeſſed not, like the Czars and Czarinas, a vaſt yet compact and undivided empire, made uſe of arms as auxiliaries to political management and intrigue. And Frederic, in particular, on this, as on other occaſions, employed the natural fertility of his genius, unreſtrained by any maxims or habits of moral honeſty, to practiſe on the paſſions of men, and to make a war of invention and ſtratagem on their minds. The hardſhips ſuffered by the diſſidents in Poland had driven many of them to take refuge in his own dominions. In caſe of their rights being

being re-eſtabliſhed, many would naturally return to a country where their civil liberty would be greater; where they could not be forced to ſerve in the army; where taxes were leſs burthenſome; and where induſtry would meet a ſurer recompenſe. A prince who knew ſo well the political importance of population, and who afterwards increaſed the population of his country by ſuch violent methods, was not ſincere in his profeſſions of good-will and patronage to the diſſidents. While therefore he made an open ſhew of being their friend, he took care to let their warmeſt opponents know, that at the bottom he was not ſo. The public memorials preſented by the Pruſſian miniſter in ſupport of the diſſidents loſt all their weight by the ſecret aſſurances given by him at the ſame time to the biſhops and the moſt bigoted of the laity, that his maſter would not be offended ſhould they be diſregarded. That miniſter, who had acquired an aſcendant, by an affected openneſs and what the French call *naïveté* of manners, over the Ruſſian ambaſſador, a young

young man, fiery and precipitate, and accuſtomed to think, that in Poland as in Ruſſia every thing ſhould yield to the will of his ſovereign, worked with ſo much ſucceſs on the warmth of his temper as to inſpire the deſign of carrying by force what he might certainly have obtained by manners more gentle and conciliating.

The king of Poland, with the moſt ſenſible part of the nation, endeavoured to avert the impending ſtorm. They endeavoured in vain to prevail on the Empreſs to deſiſt from her enterpriſe. They repreſented, after this, to the nation, that they muſt either make up matters with the diſſidents, or prepare to exclude the interference of foreign powers, and maintain the independence of their government. The diet choſe the latter alternative. The demands of the diſſidents were rejected; but they promiſed, at the ſame time, by every thing ſolemn and ſacred, to enable government to ſupport that rejection by ſuſpending the *Liberum Veto*, and by paſſing a law, that any motion for the augmentation

tion of the army ſhould be agreed to or negatived by a plurality of voices. The confederation was diſſolved, and the augmentation of the troops ſtill left to the deciſion of an unanimous diet.

The Pruſſian miniſter repreſented the attempt of the king to expedite a great army by means of ſuſpending the *Liberum Veto*, as a deſign to change the conſtitution and ſubvert the liberties of Poland. On the other hand, faithful to the inſtructions of his maſter, he laboured, through his friend the ambaſſador, to alarm the jealouſy of the court of Peterſburgh. The Czarina was induced to believe, that Staniſlaus had forgotten his obligations to her to whoſe favour chiefly he owed his election to the crown, and courted new alliances.

In the beginning of 1767, a declaration was publiſhed in the name of the Empreſs of Ruſſia, in which ſhe was declared protectreſs of the confederation formed by the diſſidents in ſupport of their rights. The attempt to ſubmit the augmentation of the army to a plurality of voices was repreſent-

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ed as an attack on the liberties and conſtitution of Poland, and the king and his family plainly pointed out as having formed the deſign of acquiring abſolute authority.

In every kingdom there is to be found a number of diſcontented perſons ready to embrace every occaſion of change; and this number in Poland had been increaſed of late by the patriotic meaſures taken by Staniſlaus for reducing the dangerous power of many of the great officers of ſtate; which had given offence not only to thoſe in poſſeſſion of places under government, but to all who aſpired to them in future. Theſe, with many other diſcontented and miſled citizens, incited and directed by emiſſaries from Ruſſia and Pruſſia, were able to form a ſecond diet of confederation: and though this claſs of confederates conſiſted of the very biſhops and others who had ſpoken and acted ſo warmly againſt the diſſidents, yet ſuch is the force of party rage, that they acknowledged the confederation of the diſſidents to be lawful, joined with them in one ge-

neral confederation at random, under the protection of the Empreſs, and deputed ambaſſadors to Peterſburgh, demanding her protection and guaranty.

An extraordinary diet, aſſembled in the month of October 1767, granted more to the diſſidents than had ever been aſked; and, under pretence of redreſſing grievances, paſſed a code of laws, imperiouſly dictated by the Ruſſian miniſter. This code enacts, among other extraordinary laws, that the "*Liberum Veto* ſhall be maintained in full "force and vigour, in every thing which re- "lates to matters of ſtate (comprehending "almoſt every thing that falls within the "ſphere of ſovereign power), which are al- "ways to be decided by the unanimity of "all the ſuffrages; and every nuncio ſhall "for ever enjoy the right of annulling the "activity of the diet by his ſimple *Veto*, "whether pronounced verbally, or ex- "preſſed in writing!" This forms a part of what the code calls *Cardinal Laws*; which were declared to be "perpetual, for "ever unchangeable, not to be abrogated or "altered

" altered even by the unanimous conſent of " every individual in the nation." And, to render this code ſtill more immutable, Ruſſia guarantied all and every article of it, and aſſumed the power of proceeding againſt every one who ſhould at any time do any thing contrary to the tenor of it, as enemies to their country and the empire of Ruſſia. This eſtabliſhment of laws, immutable even by univerſal conſent, degraded the republic from the rank of a ſtate: for no political ſtate can exiſt without a full and uncontrollable power of legiſlation.

The power of the king was now annihilated, together with the political independence of the nation; and he could only ſit ſtill, a mere ſpectator of thoſe misfortunes which his people were bringing on themſelves, but which they might have averted, had they liſtened to his counſel in the laſt diet, and ſtood by him when he was ready and reſolute to riſk his life and crown in ſupport of their independence.

The confederates, bigoted as they were to their ancient cuſtoms and abuſes, were no

ſooner left to the power of reflection, than they became ſenſible that Ruſſia meant only to confirm the nation in a ſtate of abject ſervility; to perpetuate the troubles that had been experienced on almoſt every vacancy of the throne; to preſerve an odious influence, and leave a door ever open for new acts of violence and oppreſſion. The diet was no ſooner diſſolved than the diſcontent of the nation, inflamed by the emiſſaries of the king of Pruſſia, and thoſe of the Electreſs Dowager of Saxony, who could not ſee with patience her family excluded from the throne of Poland, broke out with redoubled fury. The king was artfully repreſented as having ſecretly joined with Ruſſia in enſnaring them. Inſtead of conſidering that great and good prince as the greateſt ſufferer—inſtead of conſulting with him on the beſt means of undeceiving the empreſs of Ruſſia—inſtead of waiting for a favourable opportunity of re-aſſerting their common rights, and maintaining their common cauſe, they broke out into acts of precipitate violence; and formed ſeparate confe-

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derations, which, without correſpondence, harmony, and unity of deſign and action, were every where beaten by the Ruſſians. The king of Poland, unable to oppoſe this torrent with his own forces, was obliged to call in the Ruſſian troops to his aſſiſtance; but this meaſure ſerved only to increaſe the general diſguſt.

The long continuance of theſe domeſtic troubles, the exhauſted ſtate of the country, and the preſence of foreign troops in almoſt every part of the kingdom, at length induced the houſe of Auſtria, the king of Pruſſia, and the empreſs of Ruſſia, notwithſtanding the repeated aſſurances the two laſt had given the king of Poland of their friendſhip, and of their having no deſign either to encroach or to ſuffer any encroachment upon his kingdom, to enter into an alliance to divide and diſmember it. Againſt theſe acts of violence Staniſlaus expoſtulated, and entered proteſts in vain. In vain he claimed the protection of the powers that were guarantees of the peace of Oliva. The king and the republic were under a neceſſity of acced-

ing to the formal ceſſion of all the territories claimed by the partitioning powers above mentioned; by which ſome of the beſt provinces were alienated from the ſtate, and the kingdom diminiſhed by at leaſt one third of its extent.

It is not my deſign to enter at this time into the robberies, plunders and outrages of the king of Pruſſia—his pecuniary exactions—his iſſuing and enforcing the circulation of baſe money—his ſeizing the territories, and by the impoſition of cuſtoms, duties, and exciſes, violating the privileges of Dantzick, and in fact laying that *noble* emporium, whoſe liberties had been guarantied ſo often, and by ſo many and ſuch reſpectable powers, particularly Great Britain in 1707, under contribution—or the numbers of perſons of both ſexes that he carried into captivity with their effects, for the purpoſe of increaſing the population of Sileſia, wreſted from the houſe of Auſtria. If any thing could add to the indignation which ſuch proceedings naturally inſpire in every humane and conſiderate breaſt, it is

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the futility and inſolence of thoſe arguments by which, ſporting with the feelings and the common ſenſe of mankind, he made a ſhow of juſtifying his claims on Poland. Nor did the claims of Ruſſia and Auſtria reſt on any better foundation. But in Germany it is not difficult to find ſome learned antiquarian who, from thouſands of books and records mouldering into duſt, with the aid of a little invention, can drag from oblivion ſome ancient title, renounced and cancelled by an hundred ſubſequent acts: nor yet to find ſome venal journaliſt who will announce his diſcovery to the world, as a monument precious to every lover of truth and hiſtory. The reaſoning of the court of Warſaw, that can plead in defence of its rights an uninterrupted and undiſputed poſſeſſion of four hundred years, is literally unanſwerable. "If," ſays the King of Poland, "titles dug out of the obſcurity of "antient times—of thoſe times of ſudden and "momentary revolutions which erected and "deſtroyed, ceded and reſtored, kingdoms in "the ſhort ſpace of a few years, and even

" months—if theſe titles be admitted againſt " an uninterrupted poſſeſſion of many ages, " the ſecurity of every ſtate is undermined; " every throne muſt ſhake from the foun- " dation *."

After a commotion of eight years, a kind of pacification took place in 1775: when a law was paſſed by a diet under the guarantee of Ruſſia, that the King ſhould no longer exerciſe the privilege of nominating either ſenators and miniſters, or ſtaroſties †; a privilege enjoyed by all his predeceſſors. This was a puniſhment for withholding his conſent to the diſmemberment of his country, and becauſe he had refuſed to have any ſhare in appealing to a foreign guarantee which had enſlaved its independence. Nor was this all. The uſurping powers ſeized the ſtaroſties,

* See the Counter-declaration which his Poliſh Majeſty commanded his miniſters to make to the Declarations from the miniſters from the courts of Vienna, Peterſburgh, and Berlin. Given at Warſaw, Oct. 8, 1772.

† Staroſties are fiefs in the gift of the crown. They were conſidered and intended as indemnifications for expences incurred, or ſervices rendered to the ſtate.

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ſtaroſties, and re-united them to their reſpective crowns, as part of their antient demeſnes. Having violated all regard to the ſovereignty of nations, they paid no reſpect to private equity or juſtice. In every town, place, or country, taken in open and honourable war, a certain time, according to the uſage of all civilized nations, is allowed to landholders and other tenants to diſpoſe of their lands and effects, and retire where they pleaſe, unleſs they be willing to take oaths of allegiance to the new lord paramount of the ſoil. But in the uſurped provinces the proprietors of eſtates were deprived of this reſource. In the rapacity of the king of Pruſſia, who exiſted by plunder, and was, as he himſelf ſaid, "a free-booter "by profeſſion," there was nothing ſurpriſ-

Some proviſion of this ſort was the more neceſſary in Poland, as the officers of the ſtate and houſehold have no ſalaries or fees. The ſtaroſts were tenants for life, or they might, with the previous conſent of the King, diſpoſe of them for a valuable conſideration to another, who then became tenant for life in place of the original nominee. Many of the actual poſſeſſors had thus bought in at eight or ten years purchaſe.

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ing. But the magnanimous Catharine II. and the pious Maria Tereſa equally departed from good faith and the dignity of empire in their cruel and unjuſt treatment of the inhabitants of Poland. In the diſtricts uſurped by Auſtria they were commanded to come and live upon their lands, and demean themſelves as dutiful ſubjects, till the day fixed for taking the oath of allegiance, which all were then to take, under pain of confiſcation! The empreſs of Ruſſia allowed the term of three months, well knowing that no poſſible advantage could accrue to the landholders from this affected moderation. Many of theſe were in foreign parts, and could not, if they had been inclined, return within the time preſcribed; nor could any purchaſer be found in ſo ſhort a ſpace, and under ſuch unſettled circumſtances. For till their claims ſhould be ſettled with the court of Warſaw, who might poſſibly derive ſome aid from the fears and jealouſies, if not from the juſtice and commiſeration of other European powers, the right of ſovereignty was uncertain. The empreſs of Ruſſia, in

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a very little time after her ſhort period of grace, confiſcated more than 20,000l. a year belonging to the family of the Czartoryſkis alone. And what aggravates this act of injuſtice, the two princes who poſſeſſed thoſe lands were uncles to the king, of an advanced age, in the enjoyment of the firſt poſts of the ſtate, and had not been appriſed of the empreſs's order for a perſonal appearance, in time enough to have tranſported themſelves to the place fixed on for taking the oath, if they had been diſpoſed to take it. For a like reaſon the Empreſs Queen quickly confiſcated all the eſtates of the Count Ricki.

In the mean time the rage of the confederates continued to increaſe, and in November 1777, as is univerſally known, an attempt was made to aſſaſſinate the king; from which he eſcaped by means of ſome of thoſe unforeſeen accidents which are incident to all conſpiracies (eſpecially where great numbers, as in the preſent caſe, are concerned), improved with great preſence of mind, by his majeſty.

After

After all the diſmemberments made of Poland, formerly pre-eminent among all the northern nations, a ſufficient extent of territory ſtill remained to render it a flouriſhing and powerful kingdom, if the energy of the people could be rouſed and properly directed by a free and equitable conſtitution of government. Through the abilities and exertions of Staniſlaus Auguſtus a new conſtitution for that country was ſubmitted to a general diet of the ſtates, on the 3d of May 1791. By this conſtitution the catholic faith was to be the eſtabliſhed religion of the country, but a toleration was extended to all religious perſuaſions. The peaſants and villagers were relieved from that ſlaviſh dependence on their lords which attached them like cattle or game to the ſoil; perfect and entire perſonal liberty being extended to all people. It was declared, "that all power in civil ſociety ſhould be derived from the will of the people; its end and object being the preſervation and integrity of the ſtate, the civil liberty and the good order of ſociety, on an equal ſcale, and

a laſting

a laſting foundation. That three diſtinct powers ſhould compoſe the government of the Poliſh nation, according to the preſent conſtitution, *viz.* 1. Legiſlative power in the ſtates aſſembled: 2. Executive power in the king and council of inſpection: 3. Judicial power in juriſdictions exiſting or to be eſtabliſhed."

The conſtitution, of which this is a very general ſketch, at the period of every twenty-five years was to be reviſed by an extraordinary conſtitutional diet, which ſhould have authority, by a plurality of voices, to make ſuch alterations in it as ſhould be judged to be expedient. At the commencement of this diet the king, in conformity to the will of the ſtates, had ſigned an act whereby this free diet was changed into what has been called in the Engliſh hiſtory a convention parliament, and what the Poles called a diet of confederation; and in doing this it had bound itſelf to decide all queſtions by a majority of voices. To the deciſion of this majority the king, previouſly to his acceptance of the plan of government propoſed, conceived himſelf bound in conſcience

ſcience to make an appeal on one point. In the fundamental laws of the Poliſh conſtitution, the *Pacta Conventa*, it is ſtipulated or provided, that no ſucceſſor to the throne ſhall be named during the life of the reigning king. The election of a king of the Romans, during the life of the emperor, proved how great an addition of ſtrength was given to a reigning prince by nominating his ſucceſſor from his own family. The power or pretenſion to ſuch a nomination had, therefore, been watched formerly by the Poles with the greateſt jealouſy. But, by this time, a general conviction that every interregnum was a ſource of a civil and foreign war, had operated ſo ſtrongly on the minds of many, that they extended their cares to future generations, and various inſtructions of the provincial aſſemblies were ſent to their repreſentatives, requiring their ſupport of a decree not confined to the immediate caſe, but for the eſtabliſhment of a perpetual hereditary ſucceſſion. Many publications, and theſe ſtill increaſing in number, expreſſed the general wiſh of ſo deſir-

able a deciſion. In the hall of a diet held 30th Auguſt 1790, mention was firſt made of the ſucceſſion of the elector of Saxony to the throne of Poland. When this project of a fixed ſucceſſion had obtained the conſent of the diet, the king expreſſed himſelf in theſe words; "It never entered into "my thoughts to bring forward any one "as ſucceſſor to the throne during my life-"time, nor will I countenance ſuch a pro-"poſal unleſs I find it to be made with the "general concurrence of the nation." On his motion, public notice was given by the diet for convoking the provincial aſſemblies, in order to afford an opportunity for the citizens to declare their will and reſolutions on the ſubject of nominating a ſucceſſor to the throne during the life of the natural prince. No ſooner were orders duly iſſued for the convocation of ſuch aſſemblies, than many members of the diet, as well as other inhabitants of the provinces, offered their ſervices to the king, and concurrence in the mode of ſucceſſion propoſed, on the condition that one of his majeſty's nephews,

and

and *not* the elector of Saxony, ſhould be nominated to the ſucceſſion. To theſe propoſals the king's uniform anſwer was: "You know, "gentlemen, that I had no ſhare in the de- "ſign of my nominating my ſucceſſor dur- "ing my life: notwithſtanding this, ſhould "the nomination fall on a prince of my "own blood, a ſtrong ſuſpicion would ariſe "that I had been clandeſtinely the author of "the project. But farther, my own opinion "is, that in chooſing a king whoſe riches, "rank, and connections, would give a luſ- "tre to the choice, added to the virtues and "political talents which diſtinguiſh the elec- "tor of Saxony, a ſucceſſor would be no- "minated who would greatly contribute to "the dignity, power, and advantage, of the "republic." In conſequence of this invincible reſolution of the king, all the provincial aſſemblies, except that of Volhinia, demanded the elector of Saxony as ſucceſſor to the throne. After a diſcuſſion on this important ſubject for ſeveral hours, the king ſpoke thus: "There is an obſtacle to my "acceptance of the propoſed plan, which,

"as

"as far as concerns myſelf excluſively, I "conceive cannot be overcome. I have "ſworn to maintain and abide by the *Pacta* "*Conventa*. This oath I have hitherto re- "ligiouſly obſerved. I demand now then, "if by the general will of the ſtates in diet "aſſembled I am freed from the obligation "of that article which regulates the ſucceſ- "ſion of the throne?" On this a number of members inſtantly exclaimed, "Yes, we "free you from the obſervance of it; and "we likewiſe bind ourſelves not to break "up the ſitting till the deciſion has been "finally adopted." The king then reſumed his ſpeech, and required of the marſhal of the diet, that he ſhould take the opinion of the members individually, that the ſenſe of the nation might be made a matter of general notoriety. The marſhal directed, that ſuch as approved the plan of ſucceſſion ſhould remain ſilent; and that thoſe who were againſt it ſhould ſignify their diſapprobation by their voices. After a ſilence of a few minutes, twelve members only declared their oppoſition. Zabiello,

the nuncio of Volhinia, entreated the king no longer to oppoſe himſelf to the wiſhes of the majority, which exceeded in the proportion of at leaſt ten to one the number of thoſe who conſtituted the oppoſition. At the ſame time almoſt all the nuncios, ſenators, and miniſters, quitting their ſeats, filled the middle of the hall, and ſurrounding the throne demanded with loud voices, that the king would ſwear to the new conſtitution. The king, complying with their requeſts, pronounced the oath required of him.

This change in the government of Poland, for moderation, equity, and ſound political wiſdom, forms a contraſt with the precipitation, violence, and impracticable complexity of the French revolution. In the former, the ground-work of the conſtitution remains the ſame. Reſpect is paid to the rights and privileges of all the orders and claſſes of the people; and the reform, begun, but not conſidered as finiſhed, is to be carried on, as the way to perfection ſhall be pointed out by times and circumſtances, by eaſy gradations. In France, as a preliminary

minary to reformation, all things are moved from their centre, and thrown into the completeſt chaos of confuſion. What this is to produce time muſt determine.

This new conſtitution of Poland appears to be the happieſt medium that has yet been adopted between monarchy and popular government: to the latter of which, however, it leans more than to the former.

By the Conſtitutional Act of the 23d of May 1791, the king of Poland is more circumſcribed in the exerciſe of power than either the king of England or the preſident of the United States, who, without the name, diſcharges the functions of a king in America.

Here ends the author's correſpondence from the continent. The following ſummary of Poliſh affairs ſubſequent to the date of this letter, and which in all probability winds up the hiſtory of the Poliſh nation, is added in this place for the ſatisfaction of the reader.

NO ſooner was the formation of this new conſtitution known to the courts of Vienna and Berlin, than they began to concert new plans for the total diſmemberment of a kingdom, which, ſtripped as it was of ſo many of its provinces, might yet, in the poſſeſſion of external peace and internal tranquillity, recover its antient independence, exhibit a ſtriking example of the invigorating power of liberty, and diffuſe the ſpirit of freedom among the ſubjects and ſlaves of neighbouring and arbitrary princes: Though the court of Berlin, as a preliminary condition to that defenſive alliance which it had formed with Poland no later than March 1790, had required that a new form of government ſhould be eſtabliſhed, whoſe ſtability and duration might be relied on *, the

* It is difficult to penetrate into the ſecret motives of arbitrary princes; and hence it muſt be allowed, that a great portion of hiſtories, eſpecially of thoſe that aim chiefly at amuſing the reader, by pretending to account for every thing they relate, is wholly chimerical. Yet, judging of the court of Berlin by a fair and obvious analogy,

the Pruſſians immediately began, as well as the Ruſſians, to draw powerful armies towards the confines of Poland, and to frown, and threaten the infant government with diſſolution, and the kingdom with renewed rapacity and outrage.

After the eſtabliſhment of the new conſtitution, it was incumbent on the king to give it efficacy by the active power of government: for, however excellent moral and political laws may be in their own nature and abſtractedly conſidered, phyſical force is neceſſary to their due adminiſtration. It became neceſſary to increaſe the army, and, of courſe, to provide both arms and money. The taxes were already conſiderable, and the government was reſtrained from new impoſitions, by the danger of overburthening the nation, and con-

analogy, it is not unreaſonable to conclude, that, in encouraging the formation of this new conſtitution, it had it in view, according to their uſual policy, to excite the jealouſy and reſentment of Ruſſia, and thus to prepare the way for a ſecond and a complete partition of Poland.

ſequently exciting a diſguſt at the new conſtitution. Recourſe was had to a loan, to be ſecured by the ſale of the ſtaroſties. This project, meeting with great oppoſition, was ſlow in its progreſs; and, in the courſe of the year, events happened which wholly defeated its intention. Peace was now concluded between the Turks and the Swedes on the one part, and the Ruſſians and the Auſtrians on the other. The Auſtrians were occupied with the affairs of France; but the hoſtile aſpect and intentions of the Ruſſians towards Poland deprived government of the means of offering a ſecurity for the loan, that, amidſt ſo much danger to the ſtate, would be deemed ſufficient. As the ſtorm gathered on the frontiers, ſubſcriptions to the loan went on more and more ſlowly, and at laſt ceaſed entirely. The common means of raiſing and maintaining an army being wanting, it became neceſſary to arm, and diſcipline, both the nobility and the burghers. Here the inveterate ſpirit of the Poliſh nobles, ever more

more jealous of internal inſurrection than of foreign invaſion, and more anxious to preſerve their own privileges than the independence of the ſtate, oppoſed and incumbered the plan of their wiſe and patriotic ſovereign. "If," ſaid they, "we "put arms into the hands of the nation, "we ſhall experience the ſame conſequen- "ces that have happened in France. As "ſoon as the multitude ſhall perceive that "they are in poſſeſſion of power, ſo far "from ſubmitting to be governed, they "will attempt to give law to the diet, and "throw the whole country into confuſion. "In caſe, indeed, of imminent and actual "danger of foreign invaſion, we will then "conſent that the whole nation ſhall be in- "truſted with arms." To this the king replied, "In order to be able to furniſh the "country with arms at the hour of danger, "it will be neceſſary that we have them "ready. But this is not the caſe; and it is "with difficulty that our manufactures, new- "ly eſtabliſhed, afford a ſupply of one thou- "ſand ſtand a year. Directions ſhould, there-

"fore, be given for purchaſing them in fo-
"reign countries." This ſalutary advice was tardily executed; and when, at laſt, commiſſioners were ſent into foreign ſtates, in Saxony and Brandenburg the privilege of purchaſing was refuſed; the demands of Auſtria precluded her from ſupplying thoſe of her neighbours; and the French emigrants had bought up all that the manufacturers could furniſh in the remote parts of Germany. It now became neceſſary to eſtabliſh new fabricks at home. In theſe many months were employed; but, before the work was ready, the day for action was paſſed.

While the king of Poland was ſtruggling with theſe difficulties, ſixty thouſand Ruſſians entered into Poliſh Ukraine, and forty thouſand into Lithuania.

The whole Poliſh army, widely ſcattered in different parts of the kingdom, did not exceed fifty-five thouſand; from which number a deduction is to be made of ſeven thouſand for the garriſons of Kaminiec, Cracow, Czeſtochow, Poſen and Warſaw.

Almoſt

Almoſt all theſe corps marched without tents; nor did they arrive at the general place of rendezvous, till the Ruſſians had paſſed Oſtrog in Volhinia, and Vilna and Niezwiez in Lithuania. The commander in chief of the Poliſh army was the king's nephew, Prince Joſeph Poniatowſki, who left Warſaw on the 6th of May 1792. On his arrival at Tulczyn, which was then his head quarters, his muſter fell ſhort of 2000 men. That place was the centre to which troops were to be aſſembled from a diſtance of 50 German, that is, 200 Engliſh, miles, at a time when, on the ſide of Kijow, Balta, and Moldavia, three bodies were marching againſt him, each of which was equal to the whole of his force. It is to be added, that he had received poſitive orders to prevent the enemy's cutting off his communication with Warſaw, on which depended ſucceſſive ſupplies of proviſions, ſtores and reinforcements.

When the king invited the prince to take the command of the Poliſh troops, he addreſſed

dreſſed himſelf to his majeſty as follows:—
"Where are my magazines? Where all
"thoſe neceſſary ſupplies, the replacing of
"which, a war even the moſt fortunate
"continually requires? Where, throughout
"the Ukraine, am I to be in poſſeſſion of a
"place of ſecurity? In what place can my
"military hoſpital be eſtabliſhed with ſafe-
"ty? Where are my ſurgeons and my me-
"dicines? From whence am I to be furniſh-
"ed with my artillery of reſerve? with
"horſes, harneſs and ſpare mountings for
"the guns? Who has been appointed my
"commiſſary for proviſions? Or has there
"been any nomination of my quarter maſ-
"ter general?" And without two perſons of this deſcription, it is well known that no commander takes the charge of an army. To all theſe queſtions, he was anſwered; "Although none of theſe re-
"quiſitions can be at preſent ſupplied, the
"equipment of every thing ſhall be imme-
"diately forwarded, and no time ſhall be
"loſt in ſending them to you as ſoon as
"they are ready. Be your own commiſ-
"ſary

" ſary and quarter maſter general; exert " yourſelf as indefatigably as we have done, " who, in the ſpace of two years, have " augmented the army from eighteen to " fifty-five thouſand men, and almoſt half " of them cavalry. It muſt be confeſſed " that much the greater part of this cavalry " are ignorant of one ſingle manœuvre; " that the ſaddles, bridles and fire arms of " this corps are all without uniformity, " and the whole ſo totally without arrange- " ment, that to form them in order of battle " is impoſſible. This is no time however " for theſe objections. March directly to the " frontiers, aſſemble what troops you can, " and defend yourſelf to the beſt of your " ability.—Courage, military talents, and " the love of your country, will ſupply " every deficiency." It was thus the king ſpoke to his nephew, in devoting him to the ſervice of the nation. And thus the prince replied: " I will go, for I love my country; " but I go as to my death; and, what is in- " finitely more diſtreſſing, to the probable " ſacrifice of my reputation." It muſt be remarked,

remarked, that the length of the frontiers the defence of which was entruſted to the prince extended from Mohilow in Podolia as far as Lojow, which makes a diſtance of 100 German miles, for the protection of which he had the command of about twenty-four thouſand men, broken into ſmall diviſions throughout the whole of this long line. Some likewiſe occupied interior poſts as far as Polonne—and this is the place, diſtant 50 miles from both the Dnieſter and the Dnieper, that was aſſigned to the prince for his place of arms, and which they had not even begun to fortify till the prince quitted Warſaw.——It is not the deſign of this ſketch to enter into any details of military operations. I cannot, however, omit to mention two acts worthy of the Poliſh nation in the times of its greateſt glory, and of the undaunted ſpirit of liberty and patriotiſm that ſometimes riſes ſuperior even to the love of life. Several ſkirmiſhes had happened between the Ruſſian and the Poliſh armies, with various ſucceſs; when, on 17th of June 1792, the main army of the

Poles,

Poles, under the command of prince Joſeph Poniatowſki, as already mentioned, unable to maintain its poſt at Volonna, retreated towards Zielime, cloſely followed by the enemy, to whom he was greatly inferior in numbers. At this place, being reinforced by ſome troops from Zieluce, it halted.—The Ruſſians came up in a body of 10,000 infantry, and 8,000 horſe. A general engagement enſued, which laſted from ſeven in the morning till five in the afternoon, at which hour the Ruſſians at laſt gave way, leaving 4,000 dead on the field. The loſs on the ſide of the Poles was comparatively inconſiderable, being eſtimated at no more than 800 infantry, and 300 horſe. Nevertheleſs the Ruſſian forces continued to pour into the kingdom in ſeveral quarters; and the city of Volonna, and other places of conſequence, fell into their hands.

To the ſuperior numbers and diſcipline of the invaders, Poland had nothing to oppoſe but the patriotic zeal of the people, and the bravery of the ſoldiers. The peaſants in many places furniſhed forage without payment;

payment; others furniſhed horſes; patriotic contributions were made in every diſtrict; the ſoldiers, determined to make up by valour every deficiency in ſkill, fought with undaunted intrepidity in every action. During the retreat of the army from Volonna, 500 of theſe, like the Greeks at Thermopylæ, in order to ſtop the progreſs of the enemy, devoted their lives, and covered with their dead bodies the ground they had diſputed with their arms.

Staniſlaus Auguſtus, deſerted by his ally the king of Pruſſia, although he had notified the moſt perfect approbation of the new conſtitution; and without any hopes of aſſiſtance from the emperor, to whom he had made application in vain; yielded to invincible neceſſity, on the 24th of July 1792, and annulled, with the conſent of the deputies of the provinces, the political code of 1791; agreed to that which exiſted before that period, and even to give orders that the army under prince J. Poniatowſki, ſhould be delivered up to the Ruſſian general.

Liberty did not expire without indigna-

tion, or without loud complaint. Malachowſki, marſhal of the diet; Puchala, regent of the chancery; Potocki, grand maſter of artillery; Sapieha, grand chancellor of Lithuania, and marſhal of the general confederation of that dutchy; Stolicki, and other princes, refuſed to ſign the re-confederation dictated by Ruſſia, and entered proteſts againſt it. Upwards of 4000 nobles, and ſeveral others, ſought after the princes juſt mentioned, and carried them round in public.

The proteſt, or manifeſto, of Malachowſki concludes in this manner: "Forti-
"fied by the purity of my intentions, I
"ſubmit to the divine juſtice the deſtinies
"of my country, and the proceedings of
"thoſe whoſe pleaſure it has been to do
"hurt to the republic.—Oh nation that
"I bear in my boſom! oh my dear co-
"patriots! I partake of your misfortunes,
"but I cannot ſoften them! Alas! there
"only remains for me to offer you tears:
"my fidelity and my inviolable attach-
"ment are known to you; nothing can di-
"miniſh

"miniſh or deſtroy them: but I cannot "give you any more proof of them, as they "have deprived me of the means."

He who was pre-eminent above all his countrymen in virtue as well as ſtation, and in whoſe breaſt the welfare of his country had ever been the firſt wiſh, did not at this fatal criſis feel leſs, though he could not feel more, generous indignation and ſorrow. The king at firſt expreſſed a deſire to go to Kurow, and there devote himſelf as a ſacrifice for his people. But it was urged, that although by ſuch a mode of conduct he might ſatisfy his own perſonal feelings on a point of honour, yet his firſt duties were due to his country, the utter ruin of which would probably be the reſult of that reſolution. For, beſides that a defeat appeared more likely than a victory, even ſucceſs would only tend to accelerate an invaſion by the king of Pruſſia, who by this time had manifeſted an evident diſpoſition to unite himſelf with the empreſs of Ruſſia. In order to prevent a ſecond diſmemberment of Poland, to preſerve the integrity

tegrity of what remained of the kingdom, and be in a condition for improving the accidents of time, for recovering real independence, Staniſlaus Auguſtus ſacrificed his private feelings to the duties of his public function.

The king of Pruſſia, who had concerted meaſures with the court of Peterſburgh, alleging an alarm at the progreſs of democracy in Poland, and, above all, the riſe of clubs or aſſociations deſtined to propagate its doctrines, invaded Poland in January 1793. A patriot hero aroſe, under whoſe ſtandard, even when the king was a kind of priſoner in the hands of a confederation of Poles in the intereſt of Ruſſia, a noble band of his countrymen made head for a time, and diſplayed all that human courage could perform, againſt the united powers of the Ruſſians and Pruſſians. Koſciuſko, equal whether in patriotiſm or military valour to the moſt renowned heroes of antient or modern times, in his character, ſituation and fate bears a near reſemblance to the Scottiſh patriot and hero, William Wallace.—His

army was totally defeated by an overpowering number of Ruſſians, who, though twice repulſed, renewed their attack a third time, after the ardour of victory had ſeduced the Poles from the advantageous ground choſen by their commander on the 10th of October 1794. Koſciuſko himſelf, wounded and taken, was carried a priſoner of war to St. Peterſburgh.

The king was ſent a priſoner of ſtate to Grodno. In the month of November 1795, he formally reſigned a crown which he wore only in fetters. A ſecond and final diſmemberment of Poland has taken place, which may be conſidered as politically dead, and as having loſt its exiſtence among nations. The cauſes to which we may trace the diſſolution of the Poliſh government are not very remote from common apprehenſion. But, for what perſonally concerns the king, the character and the fortune of Staniſlaus exhibit a melancholy proof, that the arrows of adverſity are not in every inſtance to be repelled by a ſhield of wiſdom combined with virtue.

LETTER LXIII.

Voyage from Pruſſia to England.

Baltic Sea, May 1792.

I LEFT the roads of Memel upon Tueſday morning laſt, with a fair wind, which yet continues. A number of Britiſh veſſels paſs us for the port from which we had departed. Bornholm appeared upon Thurſday. We threw out a ſignal for the fiſhermen, who came and ſupplied us with fiſh. This iſland appears to be fruitful, and is not encumbered with woods. It is, next to Zealand and Funen, the largeſt of the Daniſh iſlands; and from Bornholm the crown draws a conſiderable revenue. Beyond Bornholm, the Danes have long ſince ceaſed to have ſovereignty in the Baltic; the whole ſhores of which formerly acknowledged their ſway. The Swedes revolted from

them. Their kings ſold Livonia; and war deprived them of countries now forming a part of Pruſſia. Norway is the only relict of empire which remains. The Daniſh ſovereigns ſhould be cautious not to loſe this moſt valuable part of their dominions. The Norwegians and Danes hate each other. It will require the beſt management to rule over both.

Again I view the coaſt of Sweden, and the iſland Mona, the ſight of which laſt recals the remembrance of old acquaintance. At this ſeaſon of the year, vaſt numbers of ſhips are crowding to the Baltic: they are ſailing in all directions to the various ports it contains. We arrive upon the coaſt of Zealand, and with a lead-line fathom the intricate channel called the Grounds. The pilots offer their ſervice; but the captain, to ſave one or two guineas, ventures to be pilot himſelf. The buoys, in favourable weather, are ſufficient guides. They reſemble large ſugar-loaves. They are conſtructed of timber, ſome painted white, and others black. I can ſee the people

people of Amack upon the ſhore employed in the affairs of huſbandry. Zealand has already taken on her ſummer habit: an univerſal green covers her boſom. Copenhagen adorns her as diamonds in a head-dreſs. The gilded turrets are diſtinguiſhable at a great diſtance.

We paſſed the Daniſh metropolis, and arrived at Elſineur upon Sunday evening: and the ſhipmaſter having gone aſhore and paid the ſecond dues of his cargo, returned, and we continued our courſe. We entered the Catgate as the night cloſed around us.

Next day we were becalmed. It is obſervable, that during the month of April, and particularly in May and June, theſe ſeas are very ſtill. In July the ſtorms frequently begin again for the remainder of the year.

A gentle breeze ſprung up on the evening of the day thereafter, which ſoon carried us to our deſtined port in Great Britain.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

VOYAGE AROUND THE ISLANDS OF DENMARK.

LETTER I.

Voyage in the North Sea.—Elſineur.—Deſcription of the City of Copenhagen.—Account of the Swediſh Finlanders.—Of the Daniſh Hollanders.—Anecdotes of the Court.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Danes.

DEAR SIR, Copenhagen, May 1775.

I PROMISED you an account of my firſt expedition to foreign countries; and here it is. When I found myſelf for the firſt time in the midſt of the ocean, and no land

land in ſight, I imagined myſelf in a new world. It conſoled me a good deal to find that the ſame ſun and moon lighted my journey here as upon terra firma. I conſidered them as the only acquaintance I had in this new country.

The whale ſpouts in the waves around us, and throws up his noſe at intervals to reſpire, and exhale in return the breath of life. The Dutchman is in ſearch of ſmaller fiſhes, and caſts his line from his veſſel's ſide. He draws the ling, the cod, the turbot, and keeps them alive in wells conſtructed in the hold of the ſhip.

I went on board their doggers, as they call them. The Hollanders gave us a variety of fiſh in exchange for beef. The fiſhers continued pulling their hand-lines ſlowly towards them, and again letting them drop, keeping the bait conſtantly in motion.

At laſt we ſee the land of Norway, a mountainous country, which ſupplies England with baulks and deal boards. The pilot-boats ſurround us, aſk us if we are bound for any of their harbours, and offer their ſervices.

Their

Their wives and daughters ſit with them in the boats, and ſeem equally ſkilled with their huſbands and their fathers in the management of the oars and rudder.

We ſteer for the Skaw, a point of land whoſe light-houſe is to direct our courſe. The ſhips of different nations paſs and repaſs ours. The winds are favourable, and we ſoon arrive in ſight of the Skaw.—From thence we ſail up the Catgate to Elſineur in Zealand, one of the Daniſh iſlands. From the topmaſt-head I behold the three kingdoms of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. We are in ſight of the Wingo iſland, near the coaſt of Sweden, upon which a tower is built, ſerving for a mark to ſeamen.

The Catgate is reckoned a very dangerous ſtrait; but as we have long days, and fair winds, we are not ſenſible nor afraid of theſe dangers. Elſineur, where we arrived next day from our leaving the Skaw, is the firſt town we touch at in Denmark. Here I accompanied the ſhipmaſter on ſhore to pay the Sound-duties, a royal toll upon all veſſels viſiting

viſiting theſe parts. No veſſel can there paſs without the riſk of being ſunk by the frigate which is ſtationed in the roads, and whoſe crew keep a very ſharp look-out. Some adventurous ſpirits have made the attempt, and eſcaped: but unleſs they can eſcape from the Baltic again in the ſame manner, or are never to return, it will ſerve no purpoſe. Whenever they are caught, their penalties are ſevere.

A merchant here, who had in courſe of trade received conſiderable ſums from my father, by way of being grateful and polite ran through the ſtreets with me to ſhew me the town; but he was in ſuch a haſte to get back to his counting-houſe, freſh cuſtomers arriving, that I ſoon loſt ſight of him, and wandered from ſtreet to ſtreet, not knowing where I went. I ſaw a number of houſes built of timber, and in a very irregular manner. The ſtreets are crowded with people. The Danes are rather bizarre in their appearance. If their hair is not ſo long as they would wiſh it, they add to the length by an addition of black cord or ribbon, which

which hangs down to their rumps. The women all appear to have the head-ach; each having a white bandage wrapped round her head. They have many of them a ſickly appearance, and others look as if they painted.

I returned to the houſe of the merchant, and found him at dinner with a crowd of ſhipmaſters.

We ſailed in the afternoon for Copenhagen. We reached the roads about the ſetting of the ſun. They were full of merchant ſhips, and particularly of ſmall Daniſh veſſels. The Danes were playing upon violins, and every ſhip's deck was uſed as a ball-room.

Next morning we weighed anchor, and ſtood in near to the ſhore, and to a lime-kiln, for which we had on board a loading of coals. The proprietor of theſe lime-works is an officer of the Daniſh army—a Mr. Oberkampts. Several ſmall iſlands oppoſite Copenhagen conſiſt entirely of lime rock, which is worked and brought to the kilns of this gentleman.

We

We brought out with our veſſel from England ſeveral maſons to build ſome new kilns for Mr. Oberkampts; and I had the honour, upon the boſom of the North ſea, to be made by their company a free maſon.

The ſhipmaſter forgot to take me aſhore with him—I was in bed. I took the opportunity of a Daniſh boat, and landing, I ventured to enter the city of Copenhagen *ſolus*. I had to paſs through the citadel, and I ſaw the Daniſh troops performing their exerciſe. I paſſed on to the middle of the city, and wandered from ſtreet to ſtreet, and from ſquare to ſquare, gazing eagerly at every object. This city is ſurrounded with earthen ramparts, and a wide ditch filled with water. It is interſected at different places with canals, where not only the trading veſſels lie cloſe to the warehouſes, but the navy of Denmark. The Daniſh fleet is ranged upon the left hand from the entrance of the harbour, incloſed with floating booms, which, opening at different places, permit the men of war to enter or come out. Near them are built all

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the neceſſary ſtore-houſes, and the mallet is heard thundering in every corner of the yards.

Acroſs the canals are conſtructed wooden draw-bridges. As I went along one of theſe near the palace, a melancholy accident occurred. Some perſons in a ſmall boat were taking their pleaſure upon that narrow channel of the Baltic which divides Zealand from Amack, and one part of the city of Copenhagen from the other. A ſudden guſt of wind overſet the boat; and the paſſengers, among whom was a lady, were inſtantly plunged headlong into the water. Boats haſtened to their aſſiſtance, but only ſucceeded in ſaving one gentleman: the violent current buried the others beneath the waves.

The royal palace ſtands in the centre of the city, and near this branch of the ſea, which has over it, as well as the canals, a wooden draw-bridge. It is a very large and heavy building: the convenient and elegant ſtables behind are more admirable ſtructures. His Daniſh majeſty keeps a fine

ſtud

ſtud of horſes: I obſerved many of them having ſtriped ſkins, reſembling, in ſome degree, the tiger and zebra. I do not know if this breed is peculiar or not to Denmark.

I went to the muſeum adjoining to the palace. Here are collected together the natural and artificial curioſities of every country, and particularly of Denmark. The firſt chamber contains ſtuffed birds of every kind of plumage. The inhabitants of the air are removed here as to a tomb, and preſerved with as much pains as the ancient kings of Egypt in their pyramids. The gallery of paintings next occupies our attention, and contains many valuable pieces by the firſt maſters. A naked Venus, in a part of this collection, preſents no very delicate object to female viſitors.

At the farther end of this gallery, we enter into a ſuit of rooms, containing each ſome particular ſelection of the works of art or nature. Of the laſt the minerals of Norway, the gold, the ſilver, the lead, the copper, and iron, in the ores, afford at once a rare

a rare and uſeful entertainment; and the Danes in ſhewing them ſhew not merely the curioſities but the wealth of their country. The ingenuity of the ſubjects of Denmark too is diſplayed in the handiwork of Norwegian peaſants. A cup of beech-wood, of a ſmall ſize, and the ſides of ordinary thickneſs, upon being ſhaken, is found to conſiſt of five or ſix cups, all ſo neatly fitted to each other, as to appear one ſolid veſſel, and this executed with a common knife, which every Norwegian wears at his belt; a cuſtom among all the northern nations.

It would be endleſs to enumerate the particulars of this muſeum. Among the buſts and paintings of their ſovereigns, I cannot overlook the picture of the famous Margaret queen of Denmark, Norway and Sweden; the variety of ancient veſſels of gold and ſilver dug up or found in different places throughout the kingdom; and the productions of more modern date in the ſame metals, and in marble and ivory.

Such collections do honour to a nation, and to human nature, in thus bringing under our eye works which could not be ſeen by ſo many in any other ſituation. Such collections facilitate the nobleſt of all purſuits, natural philoſophy; and the nobleſt of all wiſdom, the knowledge of the works both of God and man, which are here contraſted together.

The city of Copenhagen conſiſts entirely of brick manſions, in general neat enough and commodious. The Danes delight in what is ſhewy; they ſtucco their brick manſions, or colour the bricks, filling up the joints between each brick with ſtucco, and drawing along all the joints painted lines; and the window frames of ſuch houſes are commonly gilt with gold.

There are few ſquares, and only one of them worth notice, in which is erected the equeſtrian ſtatue of one of the Daniſh kings. The northern cities make the fineſt ſhow at ſome diſtance. Their gilded ſpires give an idea of much grandeur and magnificence, but they do not bear ſo narrow

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an inſpection as our own cities. Britons would ſeem to be of the ſame original with the Chineſe: we endeavour like them to diſappoint expectation at firſt, that we may the more ſuddenly gratify it. You have no doubt heard of the round tower, to the top of which a coach and ſix horſes may drive, by a circular ſtair-caſe, or rather road, within it, there being no ſteps; and we are told that this expedition with carriages has been executed more than once. I can eaſily believe this, and would readily undertake the ſame journey at any time.

Copenhagen muſt carry on a great extent of commerce. The canals in every ſtreet are filled with ſhipping; and you ſee a veſſel oppoſite to almoſt every houſe. This mixture of houſes and veſſels has a ſtrange but a noble appearance. I have beheld a new ſort of veſſels, and men on board them, whom I had never ſeen before, or ever heard that their nation produced any mariners. They come from Swediſh Finland upon the Bothnian and Finland gulphs. The veſſels are large, unwieldy and ſhape-

leſs fabrics. Their cargoes are no leſs ſtrange than the ſhip which contains them: but the articles do great honour to the ingenuity of the Finlanders. They conſiſt in all manner of wickery and wooden work: baſkets, ſhovels, racks, cradles, ſpoons, *ſhoes*, barrels, tubs, cups, chairs, ladles, and innumerable articles of the ſame nature. To theſe ſmaller manufactures I muſt add boats of a ſize fit for any veſſel: the large ſhip was half loaded with leſſer ones.

The Finlanders are an odd-looking people, and have not the leaſt reſemblance to their brother ſeamen of other nations. They wear long coarſe coats, with boots; and their heads are covered with ſheep-ſkin caps. Their veſſels have one maſt and one ſail, which I am told they pull down or lower upon the deck every time they tack. I cannot conceive how they manage to navigate the Baltic in this clumſy manner; when the beſt conſtructed ſhips and rigging, and manned with the moſt experienced ſeamen, find it difficult to navigate thoſe dangerous ſeas.

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The Finlanders, formerly the ſubjects of Sweden, now acknowledge the ſovereignty of Ruſſia. Their country is dreary and mountainous, producing nothing but ſmall timber; with which however they build a number of veſſels for the Swedes, who ſend maſter carpenters to Finland to direct the building.

I ſee a number of Hollanders upon the ſtreets of Copenhagen, driving a kind of waggons loaded with cheeſe, butter, milk, greens &c. which they ſell to the inhabitants. They inhabit the iſland of Amack, and are ſubjects of Denmark. They were tranſplanted here by a former king of Denmark, for the purpoſe of giving an example of induſtry and cleanlineſs to his people, in the arts of agriculture, gardening, and the rearing and feeding of cows, and management of the dairy. They ſeem well acquainted with the art of getting money. The prices of their commodities are high, but they are of the beſt qualities.

The captain of the veſſel purchaſes his butter and cheeſe from the Daniſh Holland-

ers, and his beef from the native Danes. The harbour has in it many little veſſels from various parts of the Daniſh dominions, loaded with ſalted and with freſh proviſions of all ſorts. The beef is ſmall, but well taſted. Many of the Daniſh iſlands are wholly turned into paſture for feeding cattle, which ſupply not only the Copenhagen market, but the Norwegians and Hollanders for the uſe of their ſeamen.

The Danes are a very merry people, if I can gueſs by the ſound of violins and dancing from every houſe. With all this they are proud and haughty, and their poverty makes them amazingly ſharp in their dealings. Copenhagen is the only part of Denmark which preſents a picture of the commerce and of the ſtrength of the nation. The walls of this metropolis incloſe within them the whole of the navy, and a good portion of the army too.

I am told there are few ports for trade in the other iſlands or in Jutland. The metropolis is the ſoul of the kingdom, and keeps the other parts of Denmark in life.

By

By Denmark I would not be underſtood to include Norway, which is independent of Denmark in commerce, and naturally richer, notwithſtanding its rocks and mountains.

The king of Denmark, not having many lucrative places to beſtow upon his people, covers them with ſtars and ribbons, and honours them with rank. The nobility and courtiers are loaded with gold-lace and ribbons. Even among the merchants you will find generals and colonels ſtrutting upon 'change with laced hats and clothes. This is court œconomy, whatever it may prove to individuals; and I wiſh the ſums in the penſion-liſt of England were ſcratched out, and a harmleſs title ſubſtituted for pounds ſterling.

What plain mortals we Britons are! None but the Dutch excel us in plainneſs of dreſs. While all the northern nations, covered with ice and ſnow, are covered too with the gayeſt attire, and ſparkle in the moon-beams; they have not the ſun above three months in the year.

The king of Denmark who imported a colony of Dutchmen, was ſo fond of them, that he viſited them once a year, attended by all his court, and dreſſed in the ſame ſtyle with the Dutch boors. A barn was fitted up for the reception of the courtly peaſants, and a feaſt prepared of the ſimpleſt diſhes. Here the royal Dane, after the example of his anceſtor Odin, quaffed goblets of beer, and refreſhed himſelf with roaſted cheeſe, ſteaks burnt upon the coals, and black bread. The courtly train, after this plain ſubſtantial repaſt, returned to the palace, and ſpent the evening in dancing and other amuſements, but without changing their habits.

Another amuſement, equally ſtrange, engaged at times this ſtrange court. They embarked in boats upon a lake, where vaſt numbers of ſwans, reared for the purpoſe, ſported. The boats ſurrounded the ſwans, and the gentlemen and even the ladies of the court found pleaſure in ſhooting thoſe inoffenſive bipeds.

Upon May-day I hired a waggon, the common

common vehicle for the middling ranks in travelling. A Daniſh coach is difficult to be got, and expenſive, and differs from the waggon but in name. The genius of dulneſs and heavineſs preſides at their building: but the Danes, liberal in gold-leaf upon their ſpires and windows, are equally profuſe of it upon their coaches. The chaiſe or coach of every Daniſh gentleman has all the ſhowy weightineſs of our ſtate carriages.

It was Sunday afternoon, and the gates of Copenhagen being opened at the end of the ſabbath, which concludes early in the afternoon among the Lutherans, I ſallied from the walls, accompanied with ſeveral of my countrymen, and a multitude of Danes. We entered a foreſt at ſeven or eight miles diſtance. Here were erected many tents, under which the Danes regaled themſelves. One of theſe tents was prepared for his majeſty, who ſometimes attends at this feſtival, and was hung round with flags and trophies. The natives danced in different parts of the woods to the muſic

muſic of the violin, and to the harmonies produced by itinerant German muſicians, from clarionets, hand-organs, and cymbals. I met here with my acquaintance the merchant from Elſineur, of whom I have already made honourable mention. He was eſcorting his lady to ſee the jubilee.

The Danes, having ſpent all their money in brandy, put oak and other branches of trees in their hats, and rolled back to the city in their carts.

I am preparing for a voyage around the iſlands of Denmark. Our veſſel is freighted to Faaborg, a town in Funen, for a loading of corn for England. This will give me an opportunity of ſending you ſome account of the ancient abodes of our conquerors. Farewell.

LETTER II.

Voyage around the Daniſh Iſlands.—Mona.—Fameren.—Alſen.—Langeland.—Funen.—Face of Nature throughout theſe Countries.—Great Belt.—Faaborg.—Trade of the Daniſh Iſlands.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Danes.—Voyage along the Coaſt of Jutland.—Account of Jutland.

Faaborg, in the Iſland of Funen, May 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I AM ſafely arrived at the fineſt and moſt fruitful of all the Daniſh iſlands. We left Copenhagen a few days ago. The weather was delightful; the winds favourable.—Having paſſed the iſland of Amack, we ſoon reached that of Mona, between which and Fameren we anchored for the night, and within a ſtone-throw of either ſhore.

The

The Daniſh maidens were diſtinctly ſeen milking their cows, and we heard them ſinging. The inhabitants crowded to the beach to behold ſo large a veſſel as ours appeared to them. It ſeldom happens that any but the ſmall Daniſh ſhallops navigate theſe parts, and we were ſailing through ſo narrow a channel, that, had the ſhip been loaded, we could not have attempted it. Our Daniſh pilot, the winds being moderate and fair, conducted us in this courſe, as the ſhorteſt to the place of our deſtination.

In the morning, as ſoon as the light broke to ſhow us the way, we continued our voyage. Zealand ſpread before us upon the right hand, Fameren and Alſen on the left. Theſe iſlands have the moſt charming appearance, and they were ſet off to every advantage by the ſeaſon of the year. In our more moderate climate, the month of May is frequently gloomy and cold; but in Scandinavia, notwithſtanding the ſeverity of their long winter, no ſooner does May commence, than it immediately uſhers in the ſpring and ſummer at the ſame inſtant.

ſtant. The ſkies are illuminated and warmed with the hot beams of the ſun, who has now attained a very high place in heaven, or, if you pleaſe, a great altitude. The ſandy ſoil of Denmark certainly adds to this warmth. I am walking the deck in my trowſers and ſhirt. We are neceſſitated to wet the decks every night, and likewiſe the veſſel's ſides, with water, to prevent them opening in the ſeams, from the extreme heat; and, for our own preſervation, we have an awning or ſail put over the quarter-deck, at a proper height, to permit us to walk and dine under it. It is too hot below the decks to exiſt there in the day-time. The heat penetrates the veſſel in every part.

Zealand, Fameren, and Alſen are covered with verdure: with the glaſs I view cattle grazing in the parks, and the huſbandman turning the glebe. Theſe lands are pleaſantly variegated with wood and dale, but I cannot ſee any rivers iſſuing from the country. The farm-houſes ſtart up every where; and wherever you ſee a riſing-ground,

ground, it ſupports either a church or a wind-mill. In this reſpect, the coaſt of England bears a near ſimilarity; and no wonder that the cuſtom is the ſame between two brother nations.

We paſſed a ſmall iſland in the midſt of the ſea, which grows wider as we approach the Belt: upon this iſland, half a mile or thereabouts in circumference, appeared one houſe, one man, and one dog. The inhabitant was employed in putting his nets in order. His boat lay upon the coaſt of his empire. Probably a frugal and beautiful wife was incloſed in the hut, to cheer his ſolitary hours, and to aſſiſt and accompany him in his aquatic excurſions.

I thought of Robinſon Cruſoe; but I could ſee no *Friday*. I compared this man with the Scandinavian princes around him. I determined within myſelf that he was happier, and even more powerful, than they; ſince he could with more expedition collect his forces, and beat the enemies which oppoſed him. Power does not conſiſt ſo much in extent of empire, and numerous navies

and

and armies, as comparatively with the power of ſurrounding enemies. This water emperor had no enemies; and if his ſubjects were few, they were loyal and faithful.

We approached the great Belt which ſeparates Funen from Zealand. We had ſailed during the ſucceeding night from our leaving Mona, as the ſea was open, and no dangers near us. In the morning I beheld acroſs the Belt, which we had entered, the hills of Funen, and the woods of the flatter iſland of Langeland, or Longland, apparently floating upon the waves. Zealand behind us, with all her tufted foreſts, dropped into the ocean. The wind ſtill continued fair, and wafted us from iſland to iſland imperceptibly. They ſunk behind us and roſe before us by enchantment. I am ſeated upon deck at dinner, and taking a ſurvey of the Daniſh dominions, as they riſe from the ſea! The volcanoes in the northern ſea ſometimes actually produce a new iſland to His Daniſh Majeſty: here a more natural cauſe produced them; but not leſs wonderful the effect occaſioned

ed by their appearing as they now did to us.

We arrived at a narrow and intricate channel between Funen and Langeland. The Daniſh pilots from Nyborg (a town and fortreſs upon the Belt, and within a few leagues of this ſtrait) came off in their boats, and offered their aſſiſtance; but we had already one of their nation for our guide. We purchaſed from thoſe pilots, who were alſo fiſhermen, variety of fiſh caught in the Belt, particularly ſoles. They offered likewiſe ſome fowls, as hens and ducks, for ſale. Whenever a ſhip is ſeen from the Daniſh ſhore, the fiſhermen and pilots generally come off, bringing fiſh, fowls, and greens. Formerly the Danes had the ſame cuſtom; but they then brought nothing with them but their ſwords, and inſiſted upon guiding your veſſel to what port they pleaſed.

Times are changed for the better; but they are not yet good enough, nor ever will be until the pirates and highwaymen of nations, bearing the name of navies and armies, are

leſs uſed in plundering their own wealth as well as the wealth of other ſtates.

Our courſe now lay through long narrow channels, among the iſlands adjoining to Funen. Langeland is, to appearance, entirely covered with woods. Funen preſents at intervals a more cultivated land, and variegated, as Zealand is, with hill and dale, woods, farms, and ſmall towns. On the banks of the narrow channel we paſſed through as we approached Faaborg was the country houſe of a Daniſh admiral, moſt romanticly ſituated. The admiral was at the time pleaſuring in his boat, and looked earneſtly at the largeſt veſſel which had ever approached thoſe ſhallow ſtraits.

A number of little veſſels were building upon the ſhore. The woods were at hand, and plentifully ſupplied materials for the carpenter. A ſmall town is ſituated upon this ſtrait, upon a riſing ground in Funen. Its houſes ſtand as in an amphitheatre upon the hill.

Departing from this channel we again enter the open ſea, keeping the coaſt of Fu-

nen upon the right hand. The ſame evening we came into the harbour of Faaborg, formed by a ſmall inlet of the ſea. Our pilot had, in conſideration of the voyage being nearly terminated, applied in the joy of his heart too freely the brandy bottle. He miſtook ſome of the land-marks, and ran the veſſel aground before ſhe had reached the quays. The inhabitants of Faaborg crowded off to us in their boats, and ſoon got our ſhip afloat and into the quays, which were covered with hundreds of the towns-people. As many as could get hold of a rope exerted themſelves in our ſervice. They had never ſeen but one Engliſh veſſel before. Our ſhip and ourſelves were to them the greateſt curioſities; and the public converſation in every private houſe, and in every beer-houſe, related to the momentous event of our arrival. As we walked the ſtreets, the doors and windows were filled with ſpectators. The Danes prove themſelves our anceſtors by their curioſity. It is well known, that an object a little out of the common ſtyle, as an aſs with one ear, will collect all England to look at it.

I had lately come from ſchool; ſo, as my firſt eſſay in converſing with foreigners, I repeated to the gazing Danes—

Spectas, et tu ſpectabere.

The perſon who gives us a loading of the produce of Funen is a decent elderly lady. It is quite common, in the northern countries, to find the women profeſſing various trades which in other countries are monopolized by the men. The Norwegian women are found employed in various manufactures, aſſiſting their huſbands in agriculture and navigation, as well as in the counting-houſe. When the father of a family dies, the widow in perſon conducts the buſineſs, which finds no interruption from an event that frequently occaſions ruin to families in other nations; and the females, equally converſant in the profeſſion of their huſband or father, carry on the buſineſs with as much or increaſed ſucceſs. This female merchant has ſome pretty daughters: they are frank and polite, and, with their mother, ſhew every

inclination to make our time agreeable. We have parties at cards, and dancing aſſemblies. Sunday, however, is the grand day of amuſement. When the parſon has ended his diſcourſe, the Danes inſtantly reſort to clubs, or to dance and ſing. Laſt Sunday's aſſembly was attended by a genteel audience, among whom were ſeveral military officers.

The Danes are fond of their gardens, and have ſeats around them, ſhaded with ivy, which is ſupported by a ſort of baſket-work of timber. Here the family drink tea, the landlord ſmokes his pipe, and entertains his gueſts after dinner. They even dine and ſup in their ſhades in warm weather. I have ſeen no inſtance of drunkenneſs among the middling and better ranks of the Danes. I have been entertained at dinner and ſupper every day at their houſes: their diſhes are plain and neat: their ſoups are much preferable to ours; having a proportion of the fineſt herbs and roots mixed in them. The company, while at meals, are ſerved with wine: the entertainer riſes in a few

a few minutes after the meal is finiſhed, and thanks the company for doing him the honour of dining or ſupping with him, or ſimply bows to them: the company inſtantly riſe, and, bowing to the landlord and to each other, depart, or drink coffee, which is ſerved, either in the ſame or in another room, the moment dinner is over. Viſitors who mean to ſtop to ſupper then walk in the gardens by themſelves, or with the family. Tea is ſerved between five and ſix o'clock, and ſupper at eight. Sometimes the coffee is omitted immediately after dinner, and ſerved at four o'clock, without or with tea at the ſame time. Dinner is always upon the table of the higher ranks, as well as of the loweſt, at half paſt twelve, or at lateſt at one o'clock. The lower orders of the Engliſh ſtill retain the faſhion of their Daniſh anceſtors. Luxury has invented other hours and other cuſtoms; and as luxury pervades the northern regions, the irrational changes originating in luxury will no doubt likewiſe take place.

The harbour of Faaborg is filled with Daniſh ſhallops loading corn, meal, ſalted

and freſh beef; live hogs and poultry; butter, cheeſe, and every ſpecies of proviſion for the Copenhagen market. The ſurrounding ſeas are covered with theſe little veſſels, collecting, like bees, the honey of the Daniſh iſlands for the great hive, the metropolis. Our female merchant thinks ſhe has the beſt right to our ſociety, and is very angry if the captain and I accept of any invitation elſewhere. I have witneſſed the famous northern hoſpitality in its greateſt perfection, and unaccompanied with that drunkenneſs which is too common amongſt ourſelves at home. I do aſſure you, as far as I have witneſſed, that it is only among the dregs of the Danes that habitual tipplers are found.

The houſes of the Danes are built of timber, two ſtories, and often only one, in height. Before every door is a covered ſeat, a kind of piazza for the family to ſit and drink coffee in, or to enjoy the air in the ſultry evenings.

We ſail from Faaborg to-morrow. I will continue my journal at ſea.

LET-

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR, North Sea, June 1775.

MY laſt letter was from the iſlands of Denmark: I am again toſſed upon the ocean.

We departed from Faaborg a few days after the date of my laſt epiſtle. The inhabitants ſaluted us with firing guns, which we returned with a blunderbuſs and an old muſket.

Our courſe lay along the coaſt of an iſland, which, like the other Daniſh iſlands, preſents a variegated proſpect of woods, gentle ſwellings rather than hills, paſtures, farm-houſes, windmills, and churches. Surrounding this iſland, we arrived at the oppoſite ſide of Langeland to that we had before paſſed in our voyage to Faaborg. We ſtopped in Nyborg roads, where

lies

lies a frigate to prevent all veſſels from taking this courſe who are not from the Daniſh dominions, and obliging them to go by Elſineur, where it is eſtabliſhed that the duties ſhall be paid. We paid the Daniſh toll at Nyborg; and purchaſing ſome fiſh from the fiſhermen, we ſailed forwards towards the Catgate, leaving Funen and Zealand behind us, and keeping the Jutland ſhore upon our left hand. We paſſed a ſmall rock in the Catgate, which was covered with ſomething of a whitiſh colour. Several of our ſeamen took the ſhip's yawl, landed upon the rock, and ſoon returned with a cargo of eggs: of what birds I know not, but the eggs were excellent food, and nearly as large as a hen's.

Jutland ſeems mountainous in ſome parts: ſeveral ſmall towns are ſituated upon its coaſt. This country is famous as the birth-place of the Angles, from whom our country has the name of England. Some provinces of this peninſula belong to the Danes, and others to the houſe of Holſtein, the moſt fortunate dukedom in the world, and which

which has ſerved as a nurſery for the kings and emperors of the North. The Daniſh, the Swediſh, the Ruſſian ſovereigns are from this parent ſtock. Indeed Germany, of which Holſtein is a portion, is a ſort of hot-bed for raiſing kings and queens for all the thrones of Europe. When any race of princes become extinct, or are depoſed or beheaded, there is always ſome *couſin-german* to be found to ſupply their place. Great kingdoms are not fond of having ſovereigns from other great kingdoms, and prefer a German prince, whoſe circumſcribed territories and ſmall number of ſubjects can never rival or claim pre-eminence over the nation which has adopted their chief.

Jutland is certainly a fine country, and capable from its ſoil and ſituation of great improvements. Its trade is however as yet trifling, owing to the neglect of agriculture, and allowing their lands to remain in paſture for rearing cattle for exportation to foreign countries, and particularly to Holland.

The

The Daniſh kings, in building the city of Altona upon the river Elbe, and which was meant too as a rival to Hamburg, have ſo far ſucceeded in attracting commerce*; and ſome ſpirited Daniſh noblemen have encouraged, and even ſupported, foreign and native manufacturers upon their eſtates: but, after all, there is ſomething wanting. The attention of government is abſorbed in an uſeleſs army and navy; and, in ſupporting a falſe ſhow of power and greatneſs, the roots of commerce and agriculture are left expoſed.

A ſtorm of weſterly wind prevented us from getting round the Skaw. We had landed our pilot the day preceding, by a boat from the ſhore, in Jutland. We were now, however, in known ſeas, and our own guides. The ſtorm increaſed upon us, and continued for two days. All we could do was to keep the land on board, or, in plainer language, to keep as cloſe as we

* Since this was written a canal has been cut from Altona to Kiel; thus uniting the Elbe with the Baltic.

could

could to the land, which in part ſheltered us from the tempeſt. Hundreds of ſhips were ſeen ſcudding before the hurricane up the Catgate. A veſſel, whoſe crew were more daring than ours, attempting to beat to windward of the Skaw, loſt her mainmaſt in our ſight. She was obliged to run into the ſame ſhelter with ourſelves, and with difficulty kept her ſtation near us. The tops of three maſts appeared, at a few miles diſtance, of ſome veſſel lately loſt in this dangerous navigation. The Catgate is a collection of wrecks of all nations; and here many a brave tar ſleeps at the bottom of the deep. The Skaw lights directed us during the night.

The weather became moderate, and the wind changed more favourably to us. We continued our voyage acroſs the North ſea, where I began, and where I now conclude, the journal of my firſt voyage and circumnavigation, not of the world, but of Denmark.

FINIS.

